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FAITH AND THE FAITH

A MANUAL OF
SHORT DAILY PRAYERS
FOR FAMILIES

Compiled by

THE REV. SAMUEL HART, D.D.

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FAITH AND THE FAITH

The Bohlen Lectures 1914

By

SAMUEL HART

DEAN OF BERKELEY DIVINITY SCHOOL

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LECTURE I

FAITH

St. Luke xviii. 8.

ἆρα εὑρήσει τὴν πίστιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς;

"Shall he find faith on the earth?"

[Margin of revised versions; "Shall he find the faith on the earth?"]

THE form of the title of these lectures, you will note, is borrowed from that of a recent series of the Bampton Lectures. My purpose, however, is not to attempt to follow either the method or the argument of these discourses on Creed and the Creeds; to attempt to do so would be presumptuous in the extreme. It is rather my desire to inquire into the relation of Faith, in the varied New Testament and theological uses of the word, to what we have come to know as the Faith—that is to say the statement, in creeds or other received formularies, of certain great doctrines held and taught by

the Christian Church. The full consideration and study of the inquiry thus propounded would require more time than is assigned to these lectures and far more learning and thought than the lecturer has at his command; but it will not be amiss, I venture to say, to state the question which the topic presents, to point out certain lines along which we can look for its clear enunciation and perhaps for its answer, and to suggest certain applications to our study and our teaching of great intellectual and practical truths.

If to-day I may ask your attention to the consideration of what is immediately suggested by the subject stated, I shall hope in the lectures which follow to make special applications to the Christian teaching in regard to the Nature of God, the Incarnation of the Word, the Work of the Spirit, and the Life of the Christian. May the Spirit of truth and of discipline inspire our minds and guide our thoughts and lead us in the path of truth!

I

No form of words is sufficient to define faith, as no study of words is sufficient to explain it. When asked for a definition, we repeat the first verse of the wonderful chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews in which heroes of faith are honored and triumphs of faith rehearsed; when bidden to tell of its place in the life of the soul of man, we recall what the great Apostle taught as to the righteousness of man derived by it from the righteousness of God. Or perchance, without offering a definition, we go back to the words in which the Evangelists have preserved the Lord's teaching as to the power and the results of faith in Himself and in the Father, or we look at the later words of the beloved disciple who tells of the energy of faith as it reaches into the world unseen and brings its power into this world of things seen and recreates it. From such a review, covering the whole of the New Testament revelation, we gain an inspiration of belief and of action; but we do not thus obtain the definition which for careful

thought we need. And we but confuse ourselves when we carry the words of one sacred writer without adaptation into the teaching of another, or read a lesson of practical duty as if it were a formal setting forth of doctrinal truth, or quote a text without looking back to see how it is introduced and reading on to learn the application which is made of it, or take any item in a progressive revelation—and the revelation of the New Testament, as really as that of the Old, is progressive—as if it closed the statement of that element of truth with which it has to do. The synoptic Evangelists could not have taught explicitly St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith; St. Paul could not have written the definition of faith which is given in the Epistle to the Hebrews; the writer of that Epistle could not have expressed a conviction of the regenerating and new-creating power of belief in the phraseology of St. John. We may well learn from the sacred writers how simple thoughts and words are the only possible introduction to full knowledge and profound utterances of

great truths; we may also learn from them how, in knowledge and in utterance and in life as well, we should carry ourselves along towards perfection.

Let us look, then, at the progress which we can discern in men's apprehension of the meaning of Faith. In the Old Testament it has already, as the Hebrew word in different modes implies, both the care of one who carries a child in the arms and the trustfulness of the child who is thus safely carried, the meaning of trust and that of trustworthiness, the belief of one who takes another at his word and the fidelity of one who has given his word. "Faithful Abraham," convinced of the faithfulness of the God whom he had come to know, became the father of all those who have faith; so the record of ancient times is interpreted for us by an Apostle of the New Covenant.* "The righteous man finds life by reason of his fidelity"; so the utterance of a prophet of far later day furnishes a text for the preaching of the same Apostle.†

* Genesis xv. 6; Romans iv. 11.
† ~~Hebrews~~ Habakkuk ii. 4; Romans i. 17.

And this twofold use of the word is found in the New Testament even in the simple records of the beginnings of its revelation. The "faith" of the early evangelistic records is sometimes man's fidelity to a trust, trustworthiness, *fides* in its classical sense; as for instance, in the Lord's enumeration of justice and mercy and faith as the weightier matters of the law or in His commendation of the faithful and prudent steward.* But it is more often man's trust in the heavenly Father or in Christ Himself, *fiducia* as it would be accurately expressed in Latin, as over and again we read that the Lord acted on His sight or His knowledge or recognition of men's confidence in Him, or that He lamented their lack of that confidence without which His power could not fully act.† Whether in a few cases the word is so used as to imply or look towards a different sense, we must consider later.

It is in St. Paul that we find this sense of *fiducia,* of trust in a divine person, made a foundation-stone of theological teaching.

* Matthew xxiii. 23, xxiv. 45.

† E. g., Matthew ix. 2, xiii. 58, xvii. 20.

Although it is certainly an error to affirm that St. Paul made the doctrine of justification by Faith, *articulus* (whether we translate it "an article" or "the article") *stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae,* or that he built all teaching as to Christian belief or conduct upon it, there can be no doubt that both negatively and positively he deemed it of great importance that this doctrine should be held and taught. It involves so much in itself, it touches upon so many other things which concern truth and duty, it had so powerful an influence upon himself in his religious experience, it was by him so earnestly applied, that we cannot wonder that the faith by which we believe (*fides qua creditur*) should stand forth as a principle and foundation of Christian life for all the generations to which the influence of the great Apostle can reach.

But when the definition of faith came from the lips or the pen of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is evident that an advance had been made in Christian thought on this subject. He drew his argument, we cannot but remember, from the

same words in the prophet Habakkuk which had been to St. Paul the starting-point of his argument as to the faith through which comes justification or righteousness. "The righteous man shall have life through his fidelity—his faithfulness. We are men of fidelity for getting possession of soul—*πίστεως εἰς περιποίησιν ψυχῆς* —men of faith for acquirement of personality"; * we can think the meaning better than we can express it. And then, as by a sudden inspiration which passed beyond the bound of former thought, but for which former thought had prepared, the writer gives us, not so much a definition after all, but a lesson as to what faith is and does: *Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.* "But faith exists as reality of what we hope for, as proof of things that we cannot look at"; "Faith assures us that the objects of our hopes have a foundation, that things which we cannot test by our senses are real." †

With such words this writer, in his mo-

* Hebrews x. 38, 39.

† Hebrews xi. 1.

ment of lofty inspiration, declares that the faith of fidelity and trust is a source of knowledge, bringing truth to the soul as really as the eye brings truth to the mind. That which to St. Paul is a 'grace' (χάρισμα), a condition of right spiritual relations, is to him a means of revelation of the unseen; it is an assurance of the reality of what has entered the soul as hope; it is a proof that some things are true which are beyond the limits of perception by the senses. And this is the faith which is, as Bishop Westcott has taught us, in things seemingly small as in things certainly great, a principle of knowledge, a principle of power, a principle of action.* It is not at all difficult to see that a large part of the acts of our lives are regulated by faith, while we are sure that from it come all our most profound learning and all our bravest deeds, so that upon it depends all that is rightly called character with all that character implies.

St. John in his writings rarely speaks of faith; outside of the Apocalypse (where it

* *The Historic Faith*, I.

occurs in a few notable places *) he uses the noun but once, and that is when he bids us remember that faith is the victory which is victorious over the world.† But as I do not need to remind you, he uses the cognate verb which we are forced to translate by 'believe' over and over again. We recall how at the beginning of his Gospel he speaks of blessings which come to those who believe on the name of the incarnate Word; how he records the Lord's declaration that the love of God had sent His Son into the world that all who believe in Him should have eternal life; how he has preserved for us Christ's high-priestly prayer with its lofty petition for all who at any time should believe in Him; and how in his Epistle he touches in every way on the blessedness and power of believing, even more emphatically than St. Paul dwells on the efficacy of faith.‡ And St. John's conception of believing is, I think, plainly shown by the fact that he makes this constant use of the verb. Believing is for him an act of life, or rather

* E. g., ii. 12, xiii. 10. † I. John v. 4.
‡ John i. 12, iii. 16, xvii. 20; I. John iii. 23.

in his conviction spiritual life consists in believing. We see this in his record of the lofty teaching of the sacramental discourse based on the miracle of feeding the multitude in the wilderness: "He that believeth hath eternal life"; and with like words he draws to the end of his longest Epistle: "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth?" "Ye have eternal life, ye who believe in (εἰς) the name of the Son of God." *

Thus faith is shown to be the very principle of Christ's religion, and (we may venture to say) of all that is true in any religion. Beginning with fidelity, passing to confidence and trustfulness—no mean qualities, these—it shows itself a source of knowledge and proves itself a life. It stands high among God's gifts to us, having as superior to itself only that supreme gift of reason by which man must test the truth of everything which is presented to the mind or the spirit; it crowns humanity with a beauty all its own, it looks with assurance for the fulfilment of ever widening hope, it proves the

* John vi. 47; I. John v. 5, 13.

reality of the things not seen which are the things eternal.

II

I may be pardoned for inserting here, almost by way of parenthesis, a note as to the imperfection of our language and the consequent crippling of our thought in regard to faith. In English we have the noun which not only translates but represents the Greek word for 'faith'; it comes to us through the Latin, which has ultimately the same stem as the word used by the New Testament writers. And the meaning of that stem (*πιθ-, fid-*) is exactly that which lies at the basis of the interpretation and extension of interpretation which we have been thus far considering. Its ancient meaning was to 'bind'; in fact 'bind' is another word from the same stem, and thus *fides,* whence came the French *foy* or *foi* and the English *fey* now lengthened into *faith,* is connected in signification with the generally accepted derivation of *religio,* that which binds together or perhaps 'obliges' us to duty. But we have no English verb corresponding to faith, as

the Greeks have πιστεύειν and the Latins *fidere*. For lack thereof we are forced to borrow from another stem the verb 'believe,' which indeed serves our purpose fairly well, but which hinders the unity and continuity of our thought. We cannot without an effort make the nouns 'faith' and 'belief' mean exactly the same; nor should we be willing to substitute the latter for the former in reading and studying the Bible. The stem of 'belief' after the prefix *be-* (or *ge-*) is that which still appears in our colloquial word for choice; that is 'lief' which we desire or like, or that which we deem valuable, and then that in which we are willing to place our confidence; and, whether we think of the derivation or not, it is not easy to make the verb which we are forced to use correspond to the noun which it seems to us we naturally use. We believe many assertions which are in no wise matters of faith; we believe many persons of whom we should not be willing to say that we have faith in them or even (and here we have made in following the ancients an important difference) that we believe in them. There

is still a third word which is both verb and noun, and which in its form as in its use betokens truth and in its derivation means belief, the word 'trust'; it is a good and strong word, but it does not carry with it now a sacred connotation. There is value of a certain kind in this variety of words and of sounds, a value which good translators into English—notably those who have given us our vernacular Bible and Prayer Book—have discerned and have commended to us. But, on the other hand, one has to regret that, in writing on faith and studying its divine meaning, we are forced to use a verb which gives neither the sound nor the equivalent signification of the noun which is constantly employed. Let this, however, serve for apology; we return to the consideration of New Testament teaching.

III

Our study of the use of the noun 'faith' and the verb 'believe,' or rather of the Greek words which they represent, in the New Testament, brings us to the considera-

tion of the meaning of the word 'faith' when in Greek it has, and when in English it ought to have, the article. Is the meaning of The Faith distinctly different from that of Faith? Does 'the faith' ever mean in the New Testament the Creed or the substance of the Creed, the statement of truths or doctrines believed, as when in the Catechism the child is bidden to rehearse the Articles of his Belief? The answer to the question must be based, in part at least, on technical considerations, but it is certainly important and not without interest to the student.

It does no injustice to the learning of the recent revisers of the current English version of the New Testament to say that in many cases they have held so closely to the form of the Greek text that they have failed to present with exactness its meaning in English. In fact, it seems certain that they were so familiar with the original, and had it so constantly in their minds, that it required an effort for them to consider just how it should be presented in a translation into our language; they thought the New

Testament more easily in Greek than in their mother tongue. Thus they seem to have labored to represent the Greek perfect tense by the English form which bears the same name, and the aorist tense by the simple past of our language. Of course, they could not do this always; unavoidable considerations of sense sometimes forbade; but they did it in many places where a man or woman in the habit of reading and speaking good English, yet unacquainted with the classics, would instinctively make a correction, and where such a one when he hears it read in the revised version knows that a correction ought to be made. Tenses do not run parallel in languages of diverse moulds, and they cannot be made so to run. It is largely thus with the article, though here the error is oftener inherited from the old version than in the case of the tenses. The Greek uses it in cases where it is not in the least emphatic, but is rather "continuous," denoting a former, often anarthrous, use of the word to which it is prefixed, and has the form of a mild demonstrative; and from this it gets a sort of unemphatic pos-

sessive force, so that it is best rendered by such a possessive. Besides this, there are cases in which nouns without the article, especially those which have by some sort of personification gained the qualities of "proper" nouns, have thus become emphatic. An example of the fact that both the use and the omission of the article may give a distinctive meaning is seen in the two passages in the book of the Acts in which we learn of the gift of the Holy Spirit by means of the laying-on of the Apostles' hands. We read in the eighth chapter that Peter and John prayed for the baptized converts at Samaria that they might receive Holy Spirit (*πνεῦμα ἅγιον*), and that when they had laid their hands upon them they did receive Holy Spirit; that Simon Magus saw that by their imposition of hands the Spirit (*τὸ πνεῦμα*) was given, and thereupon asked that he might buy the power of conferring Holy Spirit (*πνεῦμα ἅγιον*).* But later, in the nineteenth chapter, we read that St. Paul questioned some disciples at Ephesus, asking them if when they became

* Acts viii. 15, 18, 19.

disciples they received Holy Spirit (*πνεῦμα ἅγιον*), and that they confessed that they did not then hear of Holy Spirit; whereupon he laid hands on them and the Holy Spirit (*τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*) came upon them.* It certainly is not true here, however it may look in other cases, that, as applied to the Spirit of God, the word *πνεῦμα* with the article means His Person and without the article designates His operation upon the souls of men.† Again, one who reads the earlier chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, accepting as invariable the canon that *νόμος* means law in general and *ὁ νόμος* means the law given to the Jews, the Mosaic law, will find that the canon, helpful as it is in the study of some important passages, fails in others which are more difficult even if perhaps less important. *Νόμος* does sometimes mean the law given to the Israelites by Moses; *ὁ νόμος* may mean God's general dispensation through law.‡ In the Epistle to the Galatians we find an example of what I have

* Acts xix. 2, 6.

† See, however, Milligan, *Ascension, etc.*, pp. 204, 199.

‡ Galatians iii. 17 ff., where both the English and the American revisers translate *νόμος* by 'the law.'

called the distinctive article applied to νόμος followed presently by a like use with the word πίστις, which will serve to bring our thoughts back to what we were saying about this word. "The law, being later than the covenant," says St. Paul, "cannot annul the covenant. The inheritance did not spring out of law; the law was brought in for transgressions' sake," and so on.* He speaks with a perfectly natural common-sense use or omission of the article, according as he needs it or does not need it for the carrying on of his argument, which is no less forceful because it is colloquial. From this, as so often, he passes to speak of faith. "All are reckoned sinners in Scripture, in order that the promise through faith (διὰ πίστεως) of Jesus Christ might be given to those who have faith (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). But before the faith (τὴν πίστιν) came we were kept in ward under law (ὑπὸ νόμον)," † and so on. Has the word 'faith,' then, by being spoken or read

* In Romans ii. 12-15, the English revisers distinguish between νόμος and ὁ νόμος; the American revisers go back to the old version and say always 'the law.'

† Galatians iii. 22, 23.

with the article, passed into a new meaning? No one, I suppose, would claim that it is so in every case; yet it is almost impossible for any one of us when he hears of 'the faith' to think otherwise than that the Creed—or what is substantially the Creed—is meant. Take the Lord's words at end of His short parable of the Importunate Widow: "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Whatever the context, we understand by this rendering of the words that the Speaker suggests that at His return faith—belief in God and trust in Him, the quality of fidelity and the grace which justifies—will have been sadly weakened even if it has not disappeared. But read it, as the revisers in the margin read it, because the Greek word for 'faith' has the article, "When the Son of Man cometh, will He find the faith on the earth?" and it would require a mental effort to persuade ourselves that it is not implied that at the last there shall be danger of a loss of acceptance of the formulas of Christian belief and of neglect to confess the fundamental truths of the Christian religion. As we have been in

the habit of reading the words, they urge us to hold fast to faith; as it is suggested that we may read them, they warn us against the loss of the Creed. Either would be a great and grievous calamity, and either would to a serious extent involve the other; but there can be no doubt that if we would keep the exact meaning of the Lord's warning we must read, not 'the faith,' but 'faith.' The revisers merely meant to tell us that there is an article in the text—a fact which does not concern the ordinary reader.

I have made these excuses by way of introducing a really important question as to the meaning of certain passages in the New Testament which are generally thought to apply the words 'the faith' to the Creed or what was practically its equivalent in the early days. When we read, early in the Acts of the Apostles, that "a great multitude of the [Jewish] priests were giving their obedience to the faith," * it seems almost to tell us that they were making profession of Christianity in some set form of words. Further, when we find St. Paul de-

* Acts vi. 7.

claring, as he awaits the martyr's death and the martyr's crown, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith," * he seems to be bearing witness not only to his fulfilment of duty as a disciple in the conflict and race of life but also to his maintenance of Christian doctrine as a preacher and apostle. Still more, when we find an apostolic man of the second generation—for such we may think the writer of St. Jude's Epistle to have been—urging upon his disciples the duty of "contending for the faith which was in one act delivered to the saints," † most of us feel quite sure that we have a proof of the early existence of a formula known as "the faith," so early indeed that it must have come from literally apostolic days. Now, we can hardly doubt that from the very first there must have been some confession of belief on the part of those who came to be baptized, as in the ancient form of words "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"; and it is practically certain that we can trace back to the close of the first century the

* II. Timothy iv. 7. †Jude 3.

essentials of the more full formula which we call the Apostles' Creed. But it seems quite certain that "the faith" in the Scriptures is not used in a sense which passes beyond what we have noted in the Gospels and the Epistles as its simple and normal but progressive meaning.

Look at the texts which have just been quoted. When the official leaders of the Jewish people began to profess allegiance to the new principle of faith in the name of Christ which the Apostles were preaching and which was manifested with great power in the working of the Spirit of God, when they believed the testimony given to Him as the living Christ in Whose death they had but lately borne a part, the pleased narrator tells us not only that the Word of God was increasing and the number of disciples multiplying exceedingly, but also that even of the priests a great multitude were giving submission to that power of faith which was beginning to prevail. When St. Paul had boldness to say at the end of his career that he had finished his fight in the good conflict into which he had been sent and had run

the goal in the course which had been marked out for him, he dropped the metaphor—as was his wont—and added that he could be sure that he had held fast and still was holding fast his faithful allegiance. We do not hesitate to render "I have finished my course"; why can we not read before this phrase, "I have fought my good fight," and after it, "I have kept my faithfulness to my Lord and my trust in Him"? What more can we hope to mean, we whose lips constantly repeat the venerable words of the Creed, when at our life's close we respond to them, "All this I stedfastly believe"? And St. Jude's solemn and almost stern exhortation that we should fight for faith, for faith which was by one great revelation and act of grace handed over to those who were called to holiness *—does not this read a solemn and deep-searching lesson of duty when we refer it to the principle of our belief, even if thence we pass to its expression? To contend for our belief, for our right and duty to believe, for that principle whence springs our life, for that gift which belongs

* ἅπαξ = 'all at once.'

to holiness and is the basis of holiness—to contend in this sense for faith, the faith which gives and strengthens our union with Christ, that faith in Him which is His in us—this is no easy thing to require, no little thing to do. But to lose it, so St. Jude's argument passes on, is to lose godliness and to deny the Master. And thus the beginning of this Epistle is congruous with the end, as the central word of each is the same: "Ye, beloved, building yourselves up on that most holy faith which ye have, praying in [the] Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life eternal." * It is an echo of the Gospel: "Whoso hath faith in the Son hath life eternal." †

IV

The New Testament, then, dwells on faith as a grace of character and principle of life, of action, and of knowledge, not passing quite over into the meaning which is suggested when we speak of our confession of belief as the Faith which we hold and main-

* Jude 20, 21. † John iii. 36.

tain. This fact may help us to understand, in regard to certain aspects of Christian belief and their expression in words which we propose to consider, the immense importance of faith and of its right use. That the soul of man should be faithful because of its personal relation with God—a relation which is perhaps best expressed by the old word 'affiance'—that it should have that trust in God revealed in His Son which brings it into His very life, that man should learn truth far beyond any evidence of the senses because faith makes hope real and proves the invisible, all this is of the very essence of the soul's life and growth. It cannot be fully described, because it cannot be brought within limitations; its operation and effect cannot be told in words, because they are spiritually discerned. From this it follows, that any form of statement in regard to matters of faith—whether we mean the faculty or grace or the truth divinely made known—must be inadequate and liable to correction. Our soundest knowledge, to adapt the great Hooker's words, is that we know not truth as indeed it is, and our

safest eloquence concerning it is our silence. Yet speak we must, for truth must be confessed; and think we must, or the greatest gift of God within our souls will perish.

And thus the Apostle taught in the Epistle in which he was exalting the power of faith: "In heart"—or in our phrase, in soul—"is men's faith, by mouth is their confession; the former brings justification (or righteousness), the later brings salvation (or perfection)." * Selfishness of belief is selfishness of truth; as he who learns but does not teach has no fruitful knowledge, so he who believes but makes no confession of his belief has not a living faith. It is not enough for man to find how he may be just before God; he must reach far beyond this to that perfection which can be attained only in holiness. Supreme faith is supreme truth; and supreme truth must be both known and declared. Therefore it is not amiss, passing beyond the classical and the New Testament use of words, to call that which we believe our 'belief' and the object of our faith our 'faith'; we thus assume a new

* Romans x. 10.

responsibility for definition and for carefulness of thought. We do indeed feel that there is a sacredness about belief in a person or faith in a truth, which will not allow us to apply the phrase lightly to others than God; but we allow ourselves, and we can scarce help it, as was just said, to call our confession by the name of belief and our apprehension of truth by the name of 'the faith.' We may not forget the source whence we derive our knowledge; but we must certify to our knowledge and certify moreover that we have tested this knowledge by our heaven-bestowed power of reason. Thus it comes to pass that in the historic Church of Christ we have not only *fides qua creditur* but also *fides cui creditur,* not only faith by which we believe but also the faith which we believe. The former is of the very essence of religion, the latter is necessary for its expression and extension; the former belongs to its revelation, the latter is called forth by its history. Of the former I have spoken somewhat to-day; some considerations as to the latter are to be presented later.

V

Let me, however, add one consideration here, as connected with what has been thus far suggested and introductory to what is to follow. The objects of faith do not change; they are all, in the last analysis, visions of the unchanging and eternal God. The knowledge which comes from faith does grow, but its growth is in scope and in exactness; the form of thought, of expression, of assent must change, not as a rule easily nor rapidly, but with the lapse of ages and the modifications of philosophical thought, of language, of the boundaries of our ignorance. The phraseology of the fourth century has been long retained, though sometimes not without adaptation or an effort at explanation; but those who decided on it did not consider it absolutely final, and it is possible that it may not endure for as many more centuries as those in which it has been so well used. There was a controversy in our Church not so very long ago over certain words spoken as by authority: "Fixedness of interpretation is of the essence of the Creeds."

Few of us would insist on that form of words now. But, God helping us, we shall ever affirm that fixity of truth is of the essence of faith, and that the Christian faith is truly held and taught by those who receive the revelation of essential verities and declare it under the guidance of the Spirit as He ever leads the faithful in the way of truth.*

* John xvi. 13; the reading with ἐν and the dative seems to give the better meaning.

LECTURE II

FAITH IN GOD

St. Mark xi. 22.

Ἔχετε πίστιν Θεοῦ.
"Have faith in God."

In the former lecture we undertook to study the meaning and power of faith as they are taught in the New Testament and accepted by Christians. We found that faith, which is primarily fidelity and then trust or affiance, involves a personal relation to one whom we believe and in whom we believe, and that it is thus a test of character. We found that faith is also a source of knowledge, and that it tells us of things hoped for, unseen and eternal, as our senses and the evidence of others tell us of things present, seen and temporal. We noted that, though faith baffles full definition, it can yet find expression in words; and that, though the use of the term is almost cer-

tainly later than New Testament times, 'the Faith' has come to mean a recognized expression of the great facts which faith has brought to our souls and our hearts. We glanced at the relation between the eternal truths with which faith has chiefly to do and their necessarily imperfect expression; and to-day we are to look a little more definitely at faith in God which we hold and the faith in God which finds utterance in our confession and our worship.

I

Faith, above all things else, is distinctly a personal relation. And its highest act, which is also its most essential and necessary act, is trust in God and fidelity to God. If its source is personal and its object is personal, then it must ultimately rest upon Him in Whom personality is recognized in its fulness, it must finally reach out to Him in Whom personality is completely expressed. We can truly say, even at the present stage of the argument, that if we believe at all we really believe God and believe in God, we take His word and put our trust in Him.

Here, at any rate, we can make the distinction, not always observed, indeed, in language but always confessed when it is brought to the mind, between believing a person and believing in a person (*credere alicui* and *credere in aliquem*), both being distinguished from believing a statement as to a person or thing (*credere aliquem, aliquid, esse*). A large part of our knowledge comes to us from our belief of other men's knowledge and honesty; and practically we have no more doubt of the truth of that to which they testify than we have of the truth of that to which our own senses have borne witness. We believe many men whom we know and many whom we do not know, without incurring the charge of credulity or thoughtless assent; yet there are few men whom we have so thoroughly tried or whom we hold in such high esteem that we can say that we believe in them. God is indeed the only person in whom we can really believe, the only one on whom faith can implicitly rest (ἐπί), towards whom faith can with full confidence reach out (εἰς), in whom faith can surely dwell (ἐν). We believe, we say, the stability of nature's

laws, the permanence of character, the ultimate victory of righteousness;* but this is only when we find in those laws the unchanging will of God, in that character the reflection of His life, in that victory the unconquerable strength of His truth. And indeed we cannot help saying to ourselves that these things, because they are contingent, may conceivably change, but that there can be no possible change in the will, the life, the truth of God. If we seek to know somewhat of faith, we must ask as to our faith in Him, as He is a person and as we are brought into personal relations with Him.

And we shall do well to remember, as we are taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that God has never been known except by faith, and that worship and service have never been rendered to Him except on the basis of faith. "In it the men of older time had witness borne to them," † as did those of later days, and as do we. Enoch and Noah and Abraham, "in the dawn of history's morning," had no more immediate or

* Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, I.

† Hebrews xi. 2.

more easy access to truth and to the source of truth than is given to our lot "upon whom the ends of the world are come"; nay rather, they were filled with joy at the prospect of seeing this day, the Lord's day and ours, the day of nearer approach and of clearer vision.* We walk in the steps of the father of the faithful, the friend of God, with humble confidence; but our faith is as direct as his, while his was a type or shadow of that whereof we have the very image. By faith the fathers knew God, and by faith we know Him; yet they received not the promise, because without us they could not attain perfection.

II

We cannot tell how man first came to believe that God is, still less how he came to have faith in Him. None of us, I venture to say, can remember how the knowledge of God first came to his soul or how he was persuaded that in God he might or should put his trust. Doubtless, most of us would say, a father or mother whose every word we

* John viii. 56.

accepted as true told us of Him, and we believed what was said. Doubtless some experience, long passed from memory, turned this confidence in a parent into the beginning of faith in God. Doubtless our prayers and the answers to them quickened our faith, and we came to know God, as we came to know other persons, by meeting Him and speaking with Him and feeling His influence upon us. Most certainly we know God now by a real knowledge and are more sure of Him than we are of any other person, even of ourselves.

We may ask ourselves, as we come to years of questioning and study, how if we did not know God we should be led to the conviction that He is; or if we are forced to search for a reason for the faith which we have once had, we may inquire as to its foundation and the manner of rebuilding upon it; or we may consider how we should deal with a man who might tell us intelligently and honestly that he was in doubt whether there is a God or no. And the argument, as we should use it with ourselves or with others, is a strong one. The physical

world in which we live, and with the phenomena of which we are perforce acquainted, is a world of order and of power, of usefulness and of beauty; the moral world in which we find ourselves, and in which we are brought into contact with other moral beings, is one which educates character and trains affection and will, conscience and reason; on the whole, our world is administered in the interests of happiness and of virtue; and most of us find that it bears evidence of being a world in which moral beings like ourselves are or may be prepared for a life more extended than here falls to our lot. All this might practically lead us to believe that there is an intelligent Creator with a purposeful and benevolent will, Who is also a moral governor, and Who stands in vital relations to all that He has made and especially to the rational agents to whom He gives so much happiness and power and responsibility. And, as I was saying, we press this argument from design or from moral government upon ourselves when doubts arise in our minds, or upon others when for their own sake or for ours they

ask us a reason for the hope that is in us.

But however confidently we use this line of thought or of speech, we do not for a moment think that we are creating in the mind or the soul the thought of God, or—to speak more accurately—that we are introducing it into the mind or the soul. We cannot create it, we cannot even introduce it, any more than we can create the seeing eye, or can impart to an eye as yet sightless the power of vision. We teach the child to use his eyes, to interpret what they report, to protect them from harm, to seek relief in case they receive an injury; but the eye is part of an organism which lives and grows, and in the last physical analysis it is the light already existing without the eye which has developed it and made it to be what it is. And in like manner, the soul of man by faith knows God because God is; and God has made the soul of man with an initial and growing aptitude to know Him, and has given it the power of faith as He has given the eye the power of vision, that it may see Him and in Him may come to the knowl-

edge of truth and righteousness and holiness.

We cannot explain; we can but state the facts of observation and experience; and we find that they have been and are the same in kind, though far differing in degree, in all the ages and among all mankind. In quiet ways faith is, as we may say, transmitted with other intellectual and spiritual powers, attracting little attention because it is so natural and does its work so silently; while again with mighty power it shows its stored-up energy and works in heroes the miracles which adorn the history of the great company of faithful people. We know that it worked in men before Abraham made his confession of God, and gained titles God-ward and man-ward—Friend of God, Father of believers—which make him honored in the history of the world; we know that it was not Moses alone who endured as seeing the invisible One; we know that in the annals of the Christian Church, as in those of the earlier dispensations, we may read over and over again the victories of faith; we know that those annals, rightly read, tell of what men have patiently suffered and bravely

undertaken because they had faith in the living God. But how that faith came, save that it was the gift of God Himself, we cannot tell.

The great revelation of faith, the great truth which it taught to men of old and teaches in more profound meaning to us, is that God is One. There is, as we have seen, no real faith except in a Divine person; there is no true faith except in the One God. Legendary stories tell us how the great patriarch, inheriting the acknowledgment of gods many and lords many, the son (it is said) of an idol-maker, came to the confession of one only God as he studied the starry heavens and saw the workings of providence and searched the spirit that was in him. And because he believed in the one God thus revealed, because he was the great monotheist of that early time, the power of his faith has been a mighty inspiration; it was entrusted to his descendants along chosen lines; and kept by them, though often hardly kept, it is religiously the great legacy of the Old Covenant to the New.

At the very head of the Law which was

given to the chosen people as they were becoming a theocratic nation is the declaration: "He who is our God is one"; * and this is a truth which can never be abrogated, which can never cease to hold its power. It is no easy truth to believe, no easy truth to understand; the mind of nearly the whole gentile world, the world outside of the special covenant, was so set against it that we wonder when we find a philosopher or a poet with the power of a seer acknowledging and teaching the unity of God; and there is scarce a page of the history of the Jewish people under judges and kings on which we do not read of the polytheistic idolatry into which they persistently fell and from which they were delivered only at the cost of the great captivity. We might almost say, if we dared, that the thought of the unity of God is not connatural with man's belief in the divine, as revealed by creation and providence and moral government; but we declare, and we must declare, that the great affirmation of faith is that God is One, the great

* Deuteronomy vi. 4; translate: "Jahveh is our God; Jahveh is One;" cf. Exodus vi. 2, 3.

demand of faith is that God be worshipped, yes and loved, as One. "Hear, O Israel: our God is One; and thou shalt love Him." Hence comes every great "categorical imperative"; hence comes the irresistible power of a true faith. This truth, because it is the greatest of all truths, is difficult beyond others; and its difficulty, which springs from its greatness, has led to serious misapprehensions and denials which mar the history of its revelation; we may well question whether it could have been rightly understood at the first.

III

However the religious leaders may have grasped its full meaning, we can hardly doubt that the doctrine of one God meant to the Jewish people for a long time that they as a nation had but one God, or perhaps that they had but one supreme God; and they were ready to confess that any other nation might have another god as its only or supreme divinity. "*Cujus regio, ejus religio*" was more seriously believed

in those ancient days than in the more recent times when the proverb was made current. The king of Judah who submitted himself to the king of Syria felt that he must set up an altar in the temple at Jerusalem to the chief god of Syria;* and the emigrants brought from the East to the land of Israel complained that they suffered from lions because they knew not the manner of worshipping the god of the country to which they had been removed.† Thus at times the monotheism of the Jewish people, when it was kept from degenerating into polytheism, did not advance beyond what we call henotheism or monolatry, which practically denies that there is and can be but one living and true God.

But apart from this error, on which we do not need now to dwell, the Hebrews long failed to understand that by the Unity —or rather the Oneness—of God is meant much more than is implied by a declaration that there is but one God. It is true that the faithful Jew or Christian does worship

* II. Kings xvi. 10 ff.; cf. II. Chronicles xxv. 14.

† II. Kings xvii. 25 ff.

one God, not two or three, not a hundred or a thousand; our faith would not tolerate polytheism, and our reason would not allow us to recognize equal or practically equal gods. But our faith goes beyond this, in declaring that our God, the God of our faith, is One, not alone or chiefly numerically, but integrally. If words will serve to express the thought, one-ness is an essential attribute of His being; He has in Him all that belongs to the highest conception of completeness, of a unity complete in itself, indivisible and incommunicable. The unity of God is therefore a different thing from the unity of any other being, a stone, a plant, an animal, a man, though the higher we go in the scale the nearer we approach to the unity of God. Man has the unity of a person made complete by his relationship to other persons; God has the supreme unity which is not indeed without relationships, but which has those relationships within Himself. How near the faith of the Abrahamic believer was to attaining this truth we do not know; but in the days of psalmists and prophets it began to be apprehended. We feel certain

that the later writers of the Old Testament did not hold to the oneness of God as do the modern Jews and the Mohammedans; the being with whom they stood in such close relations, whom they worshipped, and from whom they expected so much, was a one-ly God but not a lonely God; He was not like the deity of the Stoics, fate-controlled, or like the deities of the Epicureans, happy because indifferent to man's joys or sorrows; such weak conceptions were far from those who sang the praises of the God of Israel and lived by His life and for Him.* The real unity of God, the unity which appeals to faith and satisfies reason, demands ultimately that faith in God which the Christian Church professes.

Now, this begins to appear in the Old Testament and in other pre-Christian writings, as indeed its clearer statement appears for the more part in the New Testament, in a devotional or religious rather than a didactic or doctrinal form. The poet and seer found that his faith in God, the Creator and Governor of the world and of men, led

* See Medd, *The One Mediator*, Lecture I.

him to faith in the Wisdom or Word—he came very near saying the Son—of God. As he meditated on the meaning of creation, one poet made Wisdom speak in words which seem to belong to St. Paul in his later Epistles, claiming a place as counsellor and equal of the Most High, planning His great designs before the world and carrying them out when the worlds were made.* In the Psalms we read of the Word (or a word) of God whereby the heavens were made;† and though this is parallel to the phrase in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "By faith we understand that the ages were framed by an utterance of God," ‡ and need not imply a second person in the Godhead, yet it almost certainly led to that "very old teaching of the synagogue" in regard to a mediating Word,§ which declared the counsel and might of the One God of Israel to be effective through His Word or Wisdom.

And still more often and more distinctly do we read of the Spirit or Breath or Life

* Proverbs viii. 22 ff.

† Psalm xxxiii. 6: דְּבַר.

‡ *ῥήματι*, not *λόγῳ*.

§ מֵימְרָא.

should be ר (reh)

of the Almighty as sharing the attributes of His divinity. Not always, indeed, in words which must be thus applied, but constantly in such a way as to suggest it, as far back as the days of David in an utterance which is acknowledged by all to be his, and as late as the time of the Second Isaiah, do we find such words as these: "The Spirit of God spake by me, and His Word was on my tongue"; "The Lord God and His Spirit hath sent me." Men had come to a belief in God's Spirit in a devotional, poetical, prophetic way, even more distinctly than they had come to believe in His Word; and in fact the operation of the living power of God was more clearly manifest than that of His reason. Thus, even before the closing of the canon of the Old Testament, the mind of the pious Jew had moved towards faith in the Word of the one eternal God and in His Spirit. And the sapiental and meditative writings of the period between the Old Testament and the New show that this faith was quickened then and that it found still more clear expression. The thought of a King Messiah gave way to the expectation of a

divine pre-existent Mediator, the first-born of God, the heavenly Man, the eternal Word, the Memra; and with Him was expected the coming of the Holy Spirit, restoring the gift of prophecy which had failed since Malachi, God's voice in Man.*

Thus the mind of devout men in Israel, of those who were looking for redemption and expecting the fulfilment of the promises, had passed far beyond the rigid monotheism which had seemed to mark the teaching and the belief of the earlier days. Faith, holding to its personal relation to the God of the fathers, had come to know Him more fully than the fathers had known Him; faith, accepted as a source of the highest knowledge, had gained an apprehension of the manner of the life of the living and true God. Thus it was that, when the approach of the Gospel was announced, its herald could proclaim a revelation of the Spirit of God made by His Son in Whom He was well

* See especially the opening section of the article on the Trinity in the additional (fifth) volume, p. 308, of Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, by Professor Hugh M. Scott.

pleased. The first two chapters of St. Luke's Gospel bear the strongest evidence that they reproduce the thoughts, the experience, and the very words of those who had to do with the ushering-in of the new covenant. The phraseology is that of the older covenant—both narrative and hymns must have been told and sung originally in Hebrew; yet the great revelation, wonderful though it was, found the minds as well as the words of men prepared for it. "Thy child shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest"; "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and that which shall be born shall be called holy, the Son of God"; "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and made redemption for His people"; "Unto you is born a Saviour who is Christ the Lord"—"a victorious Leader, the Lord anointed, Jahveh Messiah." * The record of the Baptism is not, we may well think, as old as the event itself; but we find no anachronism when we read that at that early day there was the proclamation of the Son of God and the open manifestation of

* Luke i. 32, 35, 68; ii. 11.

His Spirit;* for some of those who witnessed this great act of consecration were well prepared for both, as they had come to faith in the Son and the Spirit of the eternal Father. The use of the words or names by the writers of the earlier Gospels seemed to awaken no surprise and to call for no explanation; Christ could speak of His marvellous works as done by the Spirit of God, and could declare—evidently speaking of Himself, though privately indeed to His disciples—that the Father could be known by none save the Son and he to whom the Son should reveal Him.† St. John, writing at a later time and perhaps rather interpreting than reproducing what Christ had said, tells us how He called Himself the Son of God, how He even declared that as a gift from the Father He possessed the divine attribute of having life in Himself, and how He gave the promise of the Spirit who was His Spirit because the Father's;‡ all was leading up to the revelation which was reserved to the close of the Gospel that the

* Luke iii. 21, 22. † Matthew xi. 27.
‡ John x. 36, v. 26, xv. 26, xvi. 25.

name of God is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

We may also note how soon and how naturally the Evangelists began to call Christ by a name which to them as Hebrews writing in Greek was a very sacred name and represented the ineffable tetragrammaton of the older Scriptures, the name which we continue in constant and reverent use though it does not always recall to us the name of Jahveh—'the Lord.' It was the Lord Who appointed the seventy, the Lord Who rose from the dead and appeared to His Apostles, the Lord Whom the beloved disciple recognized on the shore of the lake after the resurrection.† How naturally and how constantly Christ Jesus bears the name in the Epistles needs but to be suggested here. His place, His first disciples saw, was with the Almighty Father; in some way He was the Lord of Whom the historians and prophets and poets of Israel had spoken. Their faith was, therefore, in Father and Son and Holy Ghost before they had framed

* Matthew xxviii. 19.

† Luke x. 1, xxiv. 34; John xxi. 17.

or were ready to frame any creed which should confess three persons in the Godhead or even the threefold Name. Because they believed in God, they believed in His Son; because they believed in the Father and the Son, they believed in the Spirit; and that, as far as we can see, simply as an act of faith and with no thought of expressing in a formula their faith of trust and devotion of insight. Faith preceded what we should call the Faith.

IV

Thus this wonderful faith, inspired by a life and working out in life, was almost if not quite apart from any clear thought or questionings as to the Incarnation or any suggestion of that which we try to express when we speak of the three Persons in the eternal Godhead. It grew up (as we may say) naturally, as devout men came to learn more and more about God, to think of all His works and to have their talking of His doings, and to honor Him better. It was really the result of an intuition based on a

personal relationship; it was truth presented to the soul through faith and apprehended by willing obedience to the ancient law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind"; it came from an insight the operation of which could not have been discerned by thought and the result of which could not have been satisfactorily expressed in words. For faith is always inspired by a reality, and there can be no faith except in a living person. And the Hebrew was even from early times taught to see, in the close relation in which the God of the covenant stood to himself, that he himself had been made in the image of God; and his assurance of the One-ness, the Unity, of God was not weakened, but rather increased, by the theophanies in which, under the likeness of some human or celestial visitant, Jahveh, the Lord, made Himself known to him. The messenger Jahveh, "the angel Lord,"* was the eternal One making Himself known; and as His words and His acts were those of the Most

* First mentioned in Genesis xvi. 7; 'the angel of God' in Genesis xxi. 17.

High, so as Most High He accepted homage. He was the Word speaking, the reason interpreting, a wondrous revelation or unveiling of the real life of the God of Israel.

So was it also, and we are inclined to say, more readily, with belief in the Spirit of the Lord. Some personal power, some breath of life, came to men whose hearts and souls were prepared, and thoughts were conceived and expressed which witnessed to a true inspiration. If in the Old Testament we are constantly reminded of limited power of vision and limited capacity for knowledge and limited gifts of utterance, yet over and over again we witness acts or listen to utterances which seem to belong to a later day and a clearer revelation. A psalmist sings as any godly man might sing in any age, and suddenly something guides his tongue to a special acknowledgment of a gift and a glory which had not been as yet revealed. A prophet proclaims for his own time the significance of events or of tendencies with the declaration of God's reward of blessing or of judgment, and presently he sees past all that is immediately involved in the les-

son to which he has begun to give utterance, and tells of eternal issues, testifying beforehand to the suffering of God's righteous servant and the glory that shall follow.* Before Christ came, faith had seen and had given utterance to this great truth, that in the Godhead there is fulness of life, that the Word and the Spirit of God are truly and essentially divine.

I suggested, a moment ago, that it might seem to us a more ready thing to learn of God's Spirit than of His Word, and that we might expect the distinct revelation of life to precede that of truth. That it was not so in the earlier days seems evident from the writings of historians and prophets; and we may say that the Hebrew mind was so moulded that it must have the more concrete knowledge of God Who lived among men before it could reach to the knowledge of God Who lives in men. A little reflection will, I think, convince us that it was really so when the great Christian revelation was made in Jesus Christ and that it is really so to-day. The Word must tabernacle in us

* I. Peter i. 10.

first, that the Spirit may lead us into truth; the theology of the Son can be discerned and expressed, as was done centuries ago, while we must wait for the theology of the Holy Spirit perhaps until a new dispensation shall come. Fully to consider this, however, is beyond the limit of this argument, if not of our whole discussion.*

But we may well remind ourselves that faith, which carried on the love and the hope of godly men of old, the full efficacy of which in its pre-Christian power is seen in the loftiest strain of Hebrew prophecy and poetry, is pure faith. It does not differ at all in principle from that by which we trust and believe; by means of the same faith in which we look to find salvation—we may again remind ourselves from the words of the Christian prophet—the elders, men of the ancient covenant, had full witness borne to them. Faith was the constant habit of their thought, faith the power of their life, faith the source for them of a knowledge which they could scarce begin to express in words. They thought, they lived, they knew,

* But see Lecture IV. and the end of Professor Scott's article.

by virtue of that which they had learned from without themselves, but they were carried on beyond it all by that personal relation to God which in its results is exceeding abundant above all that we can ask or think or even know. Their faith taught them more than they would have confessed, could they have thought in our terms, to be for them the Faith.

V

Our Creed, and indeed every declaration of the Catholic faith, contains statements which the Church deems essential, but of various kinds. Some we recognize as facts of natural religion, as that God is and that He judges in righteousness; some, as facts of history, as that Jesus Christ was crucified and rose again from the dead; some, as confession of personal experience, as that Christ is our Lord and that we may obtain forgiveness of sins; some we may call inferences of thought, as that God is the Creator; some have become for us an assurance for the future, as that there shall be a life eternal; and for some we fall back upon

what we call faith and faith alone, as that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and is now enthroned in glory. But however we may for one reason or another classify them, they all enter into the articles of our belief, our statement of the Faith; however else we have gained a knowledge of them, such they have become for us as we have apprehended their full significance. Each article, evident as it may seem if stated historically, profound as it may seem if expressed in theological terms, is for us matter of faith; and matter of faith each was originally, or must necessarily have become, before it could be placed with others in such a statement of essentials.

We have yet to consider how the Church came to certain definitive statements of her corporate belief; it is perhaps enough for us to-day if we have found one chief reason for the Christian acceptance of the Son and the Spirit as one with the Father in His eternal Godhead and its glory; that it was, in effect, in the simple faith of those who knew and loved and trusted in the God of the ancient covenant, and to whom therefore He unveiled somewhat of the deeper

truth of His nature and His life. They knew that their God was the living and true God, eternal, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things. If there are in the unity of this Godhead, as necessary to the fulness of life and of attributes, a Word and a Life, real existences and really to be manifested, those holy and humble men of heart must have seen somewhat of it; if, to reverse the argument, such men in their friendship with God saw these suggestions of what we call the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, it must be that there is a real foundation for that doctrine. It is involved, as the greatest of Christian theologians have told us, in the necessary assertion that the God Whom man can rightly worship, is and must be living and true.* Thus did this truth, not yet formally stated and recognized, come to the souls of those who knew the God of their fathers to be their God for ever and ever; thus did their faith and worship prepare the way for the acceptance of the Son of God when He came incarnate into the world, and for the

* *ἀληθινός*, 'real,' 'very.'

profound meditations and teachings of the doctors of the Church of Christ.

Only—and this shall be said for what is to follow as well as for that to which our thoughts have been now directed—we must remember that the Faith does not precede faith; for in fact, and of very necessity, faith is requisite in its life and growth before aught can be declared as a part of the faith of the believer. Our *Gloria* may depend for form of words upon the agreement of doctors and the decrees of councils; but the faith in which we worship goes back to our knowledge of God as He has made Himself known and to the first and great commandment. It is conceivable that human terms may cease to express great truths; it is impossible that which is absolutely true, faith in God, should lose its verity or its power. This can, I think, be made to appear still more clearly when we come to inquire as to our faith in Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God.

LECTURE III

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Acts xvi. 31.

Πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν.
"Become a believer upon the Lord Jesus."

We have noted in the lectures which have preceded that faith is a source of knowledge and that facts of the highest importance are brought before our minds by this proof of things invisible. We have noted also that the facts thus learned become of necessity the objects of our thoughts and require to be stated in words. These words may be very simple indications of our thoughts and suggestions of our faith; or they may be the carefully weighed words in which we try to express technically the truths which we have been led to believe. But we should err if we were to claim that the technical terms are necessary either for our conviction as to

important truth or even for our sufficient declaration of that conviction. The Hebrews in their approach to the truth of the threefold being of God, the early Christians in their clear acceptance of that truth, did not need to speak of three Persons in the Godhead or of God as existing in Trinity; and neither of these terms has passed into the Creed. They serve as symbols to suggest and certify the great and important truths to which they apply; and their value, like that of other symbols, is largely that they are technical rather than devotional, and that students of divine truth hold them in their accepted sense, and thus both profess that sense and teach it. What has been said as to the nature and life of God is also applicable to the person and work of Jesus Christ; and we are to consider to-day our faith in Him and our expression of that faith in language.

I

It has been already suggested that there are matters, great and small, both of history and of observation, which we accept as true

and as influencing our lives, though for us they remain facts of history or of observation, as the case may be. We inquire into them and about them; we try to learn exactly what they mean, how they came about, what underlies them by way of cause or occasion, what have been their results, and what influence they have or ought to have upon ourselves; we draw inferences from them, and consider them a part of our mental, if not of our moral, furnishing. Some of them are a part of the common heritage of mankind, and as such will never cease to interest and to instruct civilized men; some of them are of unceasing value to those who follow out special lines of study or investigation, such as lie as the basis of science or of certain of its applications; while others are, we should say, our own personal property, each being an experience or an acquirement of our own, which affects us in one way or another as it enters into our life and has a permanent influence upon it. Thus our characters are largely moulded, and our lives directed, by some power which has reached us from without, by some person or by what some per-

son has said or done. It should be added, that there is many an influence working upon us, the source of which we cannot trace, and of the very existence of which we may be ignorant.

Of all these, at least as far as we are conscious of them, we may fairly ask whether there is discernible in them the working of faith as bringing knowledge to our mind and of reason as testing that knowledge and commending it to us. The fact of history or of science, of influence or of attraction, may not be or have been at bottom outside the range of sight—that is to say of the bodily or mental powers, to discern and to report; but when facts thus learned in themselves become the objects of thought, the inspiration of desire, the incitements of will, the teachers of duty, we are convinced that there is more in them than belongs to the range of the senses or of the mind; faith has come to make at least the beginning of a revelation as to the meaning of what has been otherwise in part disclosed, and faith has called upon reason to judge of the truth, the reality, of that which has been thus presented to the soul. Faith

looks at the facts of nature, of history, and of character; and faith presently reports that they are not fully known until she brings them into her light and shows the reality of their existence and of their meaning. The mind and the soul of man are, in all matters of any serious importance, guided and moved by faith.

We have seen a great example of this in the growth of man's thought of God and belief in Him: that in some wondrous way man received the great truth of the Unity of God; and that without declining from the influence of this great truth upon him, he was led to see that in the life of the Godhead, the life of the eternal Father, there is the life of a Word and a Spirit, and almost to confess that God cannot be fully known save as Father, Son, and Spirit; and that faith has thus made ready a way for the Christian revelation contained in the Triune Name, before it was clearly taught by the risen Lord and by the Church to which He committed its promulgation.

Now, our faith in God leads naturally to our faith in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son

of God. The steps by which the Apostles and those whom they taught arrived at that faith in Him closely resemble those by which the pious men of Israel in the later days of the old dispensation arrived at a readiness to accept faith in the Triune God. The Word of God, being known as a person, and as a person revealing the Eternal One, might readily be thought of as coming to live among men and to speak with them and to them; and the Spirit, acknowledged as having at least personal attributes, might readily be believed to have a habitation with men through the Word. There were lines of faith and hope and longing which led along this way; and that which they faintly disclosed was so real that it could not fail, we should say, to come at the last to a clear revelation. Especially, if we acknowledge, as I think we must, that creation is a revelation of the Word of God, that the worlds, the ages, with all progress in things material, are His, and further that all intellectual and spiritual existence is dependent on Him—if we confess the truth of the profound utterance of the prologue of St. John's Gos-

pel, that in the Word was all life and all light; then certainly we are ready for that utterance which is the climax of the prologue, that the Word became flesh and tabernacled in us and we beheld His glory. This, we confess, we might expect; but the great prologue could not have been indited until after the Word was known as incarnate. By it we justify our acceptance of this great truth of revelation; but no saint or prophet could have written its words until that of which they thus told had come to pass. The distinct faith in the Incarnation, in Jesus Christ as Son of God and Son of man, belongs to the days of the New Testament.

II

This faith is emphatically personal; and it sprang from knowledge of a person and personal attachment to Him. A man named Jesus (Joshua, Victorious, Saviour) lived for a short time among men in the Holy Land after it had become part of a province of the Roman Empire. He dwelt quietly and humbly in a small but fairly busy city until He was about thirty years old, when

the minds of men were stirred by the report that the prophetic power of the Spirit had returned and that one enthusiastic prophet was declaring that the kingdom of heaven was soon to be revealed. Starting, as it seemed, to follow that prophet, He was confessed by him to be greater than himself and the Lamb of God; while presently one of the forerunner's disciples declared Him to be the promised Messiah, and another acknowledged Him as Son of God and King of Israel. For three years the wondrous personality of this Man then showed itself, with its extraordinary power of attraction and repulsion, in words and deeds mostly along unexpected ways and often with unexpected results; and while He was yet in early manhood, His life came to a violent and shameful end. A few disciples had partly understood Him, and they would have been slow to forget Him; but in those excited times the petty triumph of His enemies and the sad disappointment of His followers might have slipped away into the forgotten or indifferently remembered past, had it not been for the rumor and then the

assertion and then the public proclamation that He was alive, that He had passed on beyond the power of death, that He was with God, and that from God He had sent the full gift of the expected Spirit, Whose power was manifesting itself in very remarkable ways. There were many who asked the question, and many more who were looking for an answer to the question: Who was, who is, this teacher and leader of men, Joshua by name, Messiah by the title which His followers claim for Him? He certainly was man; His life of thirty years showed it; and all that marked humanity belonged to the lowly boy of rightfully noble parentage, the studious and godly youth, the artisan instructed in the busy world of action, the harmoniously developed Man, who for a short time was a leader of men in ways of right and their opponent in wrongful ways; who suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. Certainly He was man; and He called Himself the Son of Man.

Quite as certainly—His immediate followers and those whom they influenced had begun to say—He was more than man. The

beauty and balance and perfectness of His character were beyond what man had ever shown before; even if His Mother had not told as yet the story of His conception and birth, He Himself had said that He had come forth from the Father and come into the world; He had affirmed that all things had been delivered to Him by the Father; He had made allegiance to Himself to be the sufficient test of character; He had declared that He was to be the Judge of mankind; He had, as some at least had understood Him, claimed a place with Almighty God; and indeed divine honors and homage were very soon rendered to Him.*

Was He then man, who had by holiness found a way to the might and glory of the Godhead? Was He God, Who had lived awhile on earth in the likeness of man? Some, as we know, in early days, did affirm that He was but man, through Whom to a greater or a less extent God was revealed; and some declared that He was all divine, humanity being but a garb assumed by Him

* John xvi. 28; Matthew xi. 27, xxviii. 18, vii. 22, 23, xvi. 27; John v. 19-29.

for a time, or more probably sheer unreality. Each answer to the great question was easily framed and speciously proposed, for each denied or ignored or explained away the facts which might point to the other. Each was based on imperfect understanding or knowledge; neither, as we shall presently see, was the answer of faith; neither could be given by one who believed in Jesus the Christ.

Moreover—and this it is of the utmost importance to note—those who actually knew the Man Jesus were firm believers that He was Lord and Christ; and those who first came to recognize Him as their Divine Lord bore witness also to the reality of His humanity. What did Peter think and say of Him, the Apostle who had made such strong confession of Him, had seen His glory in the holy mount, had yet denied Him in the time of trial, and had been restored by Him when He accepted his great repentance? What was the belief and the testimony of that other disciple, who entered into his Lord's affection, who forsook Him not at the Cross, and went to the tomb

prepared to believe the resurrection? What did he say, whom men called His brother, who had lived with Him from childhood until both were grown-up men, who shared with Him the appellation of the Just? None of them could ever have doubted that the Lord, as they came to call Him, was truly man; that which they had heard and seen and handled made it certain that He was, in all that goes to make up human nature, as really human as themselves; but the wonder of it was that, as they looked back after the resurrection, they could see that all the time He had been not merely revealing God, but revealing Himself as God. None of those who best could know denied the humanity, and yet all of them confessed the deity, of their Master. Neither Peter nor John nor James explained what He taught or put it at once in terms of speech or thought; but from their very being with Christ they learned through faith, through personal confidence in Him and personal attachment to Him, who He was. The chief Apostle on the day of Pentecost and ever after was ready to undo his denial by

most confident profession that in the glorified Lord was all life and salvation, that His sufferings and the glory following could bring man to God.* The disciple who wrote of himself as loved by the Master was almost vehement in his declaration that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was with the Father to be worshipped and glorified, and was indeed the very source of reality and of life.† The just one, whom the Lord chose to care specially for the mother congregation of His disciples at Jerusalem, who had known the Lord as man more intimately (we may assume) than those others, placed his Brother not with man but with God; he described himself as "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," while another member of the same household announced himself as servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James.‡

And as to Saul of Tarsus, whose faith had not grown by the experiences of youth and early manhood or even by those of three

* Acts ii. 36; I. Peter iii. 18, 22.
† John i. 1 ff.; I. John i. 1 ff.
‡ James i. 1; Jude 1.

years' close intimacy, but in whom, whatever the preparation for it, it burst forth in the strong conviction of a great soul which has been seeking for the truth and to whom it is suddenly revealed—the Paul of the Acts and the Epistles—need we argue Who Jesus Christ was to his mind, his affections, his faith? As surely as the Almighty Father is God, so surely for him Jesus Christ is the pre-existing Son of God, "over all God blessed for ever," and in his constant doxologies he anticipates the formularies of the Church's worship, ascribing glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.* Such was the early faith of the followers of Christ; when asked who He is, their souls replied in faith, though their lips had not yet learned to confess in exact form of words: He is the very Son of God, Who came down from heaven, and took to Himself the nature of man for man's redemption, and is now with God. It was following generations, deficient in faith but anxious to argue, which framed easier answers and denied, now the

* Romans i. 1-4, ix. 5; I. Corinthians xii. 4-6; Colossians i. 15-18.

humanity and now the deity of Christ, and now strangely enough both the humanity and the deity.

It would take us too far astray if we should attempt to follow, even in outline, the argumentative questions and controversies which troubled the Church for so long a time. It is enough to recall (1) that there was a period of simple faith which preceded those years of controversy; (2) that there was a strong and quiet faith which kept the undercurrent of the Church's belief and practice simple and pure; and (3) that when the Church came to herself it was to find that she had tested her God-inspired faith by her God-bestowed power of reason and had found that it could endure the test. For what were the facts, belonging to the unseen, really facts though they could not be proved by the evidence of the senses, facts that came from the knowledge of person by person, a personal attraction on the one hand and a personal allegiance on the other? Men found a Man Who moved within them a knowledge of Himself, nay rather, as on the very morrow of the baptism, men knew that

a Man had found them and had quickened in their souls faith in Himself.* They knew that He was man; they soon discerned that in some wondrous way, as He touched them, so He was touched by God or even "proceeded forth and came from God." If they did not readily grasp the truth of His pre-existence with God (*πρὸς τὸν Θεόν*), He presently suggested it to them and it scarce startled them, so natural did it seem; they had faith in Him as divine. Practically then, faith taught them that He Whom they had called Jesus and acknowledged as Christ was the Son of God; that He had been born into the world of man in order that the promises might be fulfilled, and that man by His sufferings and victory might attain a new life. They had faith—for now we may without hesitation use the formal language of the age of the Councils—that the Son of God, a Person with the divine nature, had taken to Himself human nature, and that thus He was one Christ, very God and very Man. Of course, the simple faith found a simple expression; what we call the Faith

* John i. 35-51.

did not come to the intellect in definition till long after faith in its truth had entered into the souls of believers and been accepted by them. Those prepared souls, of whom we have spoken before, who were waiting for the outpouring of the Spirit and the day of redemption, prepared to sing the Benedictus, who almost had a clear revelation of the Word, were prepared to accept the truth of the Incarnation when in the fulness of the times God should send forth His Son. No great truth has ever come to an unprepared world; certainly this great revelation could not so come. The spiritual fact or act called forth faith, and faith recognizing the great reality accepted it and held it fast. St. John did not for the first time when he indited his great Epistle say, "We know that the Son of God is come"; he knew better indeed than at the first what that knowledge meant; but we may doubt whether the fathers of Nicæa or of Chalcedon or the pious scholars of later days knew it more surely or with more full comprehension than did he. For the faith, when it needs to be put into words, is but the expression, the finite expression, of

faith which is indefinable (that is, infinite), but which is both real and strong.

III

Such was the faith of our Lord's first disciples, faith in Him, real and strong, but as yet not clearly defined either in thought or in expression. They knew Him, they were drawn to Him, they put their full trust in Him, they believed in Him. And this was the Lord's demand which He made of those who heard Him and would become His disciples. With His great humility there was always joined the call to men and women and children to come to Him, not only that they might hear and obey Him, but also that they might give themselves to Him and test themselves by their relation to Him. The Sermon on the Mount does not belong, we now think, to a very early place in our Lord's ministry, though it stands early in the narrative of St. Matthew's Gospel; but its teaching is equally wonderful, whether it was spoken a few months or two years after His baptism. And its chief lesson, I venture to say, is not so much in the Beatitudes or in

the expansion of the ancient Law or in the inculcation of moral duties, as in the sense of want which it first produces and in the declaration that the supply of that want could be found in the Speaker Himself. The Sermon is first a conviction of ignorance and weakness and sin; but at the close the Speaker declares Himself to be the Judge of men, Whose approbation is for them the measure of success, and Who is Himself the foundation on which all lasting character must be built.* Those who listened to His words and thought upon them were aware, not only of the authority by which He expanded or corrected that which had been said to men of old time, but also of the confident dignity with which He bade men find a new inspiration in their acquaintance with Himself. And in faith men heard and yielded to His call and accepted Him, and made themselves ready for some greater venture of faith and obedience as He should require it of their hearts and hands.

This revelation of Himself as man, yet beyond man, was in a way summed up in

* Matthew vii. 21-27.

our Lord's calling Himself the Son of Man.* In what way exactly the title was drawn from earlier prophetic and apocalyptic use, we may not stop to inquire; but in the record of Daniel's visions, with which the men of our Lord's time were certainly familiar, the Son of Man was revealed with the Ancient of Days, being brought near to Him and receiving from Him glory and honor and dominion.† And though it need not have signified the divine nature in Him to Whom the title was given, it did mean that He was in that relation to God which belonged to the archetypal man, to one who at least represented man before God and God before man. The word was a test of faith, and the understanding and use of it was an act of faith; for through Him as made known by this lofty title was the sure approach to Him as the Son of God.

This name and this faith are recorded in the Gospels. We gather from the form of Christ's great challenge and St. Peter's answer, that—if we may venture thus to express ourselves—the Lord asked with anxiety

* First in Mark ii. 10. † Daniel vii. 13.

as to what the reply would be, and the Apostle answered as having been forced by the question to decide what he did in reality believe. "If men call Me a prophet of the olden time, Who do ye say that I am? Do ye say as much as they, or can ye say as much?" "Surely, we must answer; we make the bold confession; it is in our hearts, though we did not know it: Thou art the Messiah; nay, Thou art the Son of the living God." And then the Lord's acceptance of the confession is not only an expression of relief; it is a declaration of the power of truth revealed to faith and acknowledged by faith: "Blessed art thou, Simon; thou hast been granted a revelation from My Father" —thus He accepts the name of Son—"and thou hast received it." * Thus to this faith the Apostle, for himself and for the rest, was committed; from it they swerved, indeed, but it never quite lost hold on them, and in the after years it opened into the words on which the confession of the Church has been framed. All was implicit in the simple trust of those who could not but follow and be-

* Matthew xvi. 13 ff.

lieve in Jesus of Nazareth when they saw Him and He called them.

IV

Devout men, we have seen, were expecting a redeeming Messiah Who was to come when the Spirit should again be poured out upon God's people from on high. The prophetic Spirit had returned in the preaching of John Baptist and the hymns of Zacharias the priest and Mary the virgin. To them, while waiting for the Christ, there came the Son of God. How soon, we may ask, and how readily, did they connect these terms, and see that the Anointed one must be in some true sense divine? St. John's interpretive record puts on the lips of one disciple at the very moment of his call the words, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel"; * and it also makes the Lord's first distinct assertion of His Messiahship to have been to the Samaritan woman whom He met at Jacob's well, and the formal acknowledgment of it to have been from the men of her city. "I know," said she, "that Messiah cometh";

* John i. 49.

and the Lord answered, "I Who speak unto thee am He." And within a few days the people of Sychar said, "We know that this is truly the Saviour of the world." * Was it given to the Apostle to know in after years the full meaning of thoughts which were imperfectly expressed at the time, and to put that full meaning into the words of his narrative? Or did some tell him, a few years later, when he went with Peter to lay his hands upon those in the city of Samaria who had been converted at the preaching of Philip †—did perhaps this very woman and some of these very men tell him, how their hearts had been stirred at the presence and by the words of the Jewish Rabbi Who condescended to talk with them and to visit them? And did He then interpret in the words of His Gospel the meaning of their thoughts and of the faith which then had its beginning? Or is this an example of the unexpected ways in which Christ wrought and spoke, so often doing what we should not have expected Him to do, and speaking in words which we were not prepared to

* John iv. 25, 26, 42. † Acts viii. 14.

hear from His lips? We know not; the world, Jewish and Samaritan and Gentile, was strangely moved at that time by the Spirit Whose comings and goings man cannot determine or understand; and there may be a lesson for us, as we learn of divine guidance into truth bestowed upon some with whom we should not expect to find it, and read of a revelation made and received in Samaria which was not given as yet in Judæa; even as we may wonder that the Apostles' confession was not made in the courts of the temple and within the Holy City, but in the almost heathen region of the Cæsarea of Philip.

But put all these words of faith together; think of the many other movings of faith which there must have been among those who heard and saw the Lord; consider what underlay the preparedness of thousands to confess Christ when His resurrection was preached in the power of the Spirit coming as His Spirit; and you will see what all that beginning faith meant. Allow all that you must for their imperfect apprehension of what was brought to their minds or even of

what they said; grant, as you must, that their conception of Messiahship and divine Sonship was inadequate and inconsistent; yet in New Testament days men did arrive at the assurance with which St. John closed his Epistle, "We know that the Son of God is come," and even at the stupendous confession with which he prefaced his Gospel, "The Word Who tabernacled among us was God," Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.* This was faith anticipating the Faith, the Gospel-faith anticipating—yes, already moulding—the Nicene and Chalcedonian theology; the great truths acknowledged before they could be expressed, and influencing men who could not have made at the time a careful statement of them. Men believed in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, Who for their sakes came down from heaven, gained the great victory, and became Lord over all things. It was a most wonderful and a most natural faith; and years after, fully tested by reason and by experience, it was framed in words that the wise might defend what the simple-hearted knew and the Church might teach clearly and

* I. John v. 20; John i. 1, 14.

boldly that which had been revealed and entrusted to her as truth.

V

We do well to note, I think, that as the Gospels, in their teaching about Christ, prepare the way for the Epistles, so the Johannine and Pauline theology prepares the way for the Councils. But here also it is faith preparing the way for the Faith, the Church's Creeds. Arriving at faith in Christ along different paths, with minds differently constituted for recognizing and holding truth, with souls trained by widely differing experiences, St. Paul and St. John had equally strong faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of mankind. The one Apostle saw in faith man's hand stretched out to receive God's forgiving grace, and he insisted on the doctrine of justification; the other found in it rather the gift of the life of God to man, and he dwelt on its victorious power; but both were conscious of the great truths as to Christ, His divine Person in its relation to the Father, His human nature taking hold of ours and

by ours received. That personal relationship to Him which faith connotes, each had gained and could not lose; that knowledge of Him which cannot be told, each had experienced. It was not in the same way that all who believed in the Father came to believe also in the Son and in the Spirit; yet the disciples of all Christian teachers were learning truths which brought them finally to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity. It was not in the same way that all who believed in Jesus Christ came to confess Him as the Son of God incarnate, the Word made flesh, yet they all were brought to the same acknowledgment that He was in unity of Person perfect God and perfect Man. By the guidance of the Spirit, man's loftiest faculty of reason tested that which faith had learned and submitted to it; and affirming its truth, it bore witness also to its value, both absolutely and in its due proportion (*ἀναλογία*, as St. Paul calls it). And thus when formulas were needed, reason threw faith upon itself, and bade men say of the great truths thus doubly witnessed, "I believe." But before the formula came faith, sure yet unde-

fined; and before the formula came also in a sense the Faith, confessed before controversy had made it necessary to guard rigidly the meanings of words. The simple faith of those who know the Saviour Whom they have believed has always been their salvation and their life; and to it the words of wise scholars and theologians should lead us back.

Of those statements, as necessarily as carefully framed, let us not speak in any depreciatory tone. They were framed by men whose duty it was to state in clearest terms the truths presented to the soul by faith and corroborated by Scripture, that they might guide the uninstructed and support the weak and guard those whom the enemies of truth might lead astray. They were cast in words of the Greek language, the nearest perfection in man's means of expression as well of philosophical as of poetic truth; and the whole Christian world for centuries has known their meaning and has consented to it. If at any time they shall need to be recast, it will be because words have utterly changed their meaning, or because thought has taken quite new moulds of expression, or because

the centre of influence has so changed that a language of quite another type is needed for the scholarly and thoughtful Christian world. This will not happen in our day; but perhaps we ought to be considering how far we should insist on the reception of our formularies, European in form with a Semitic background, upon races whose language and philosophic thought are utterly different from ours. We cannot carry them the Gospel as if it had just come into the world; we are responsible for what we have learned since the first century as well as for what we have received from the Apostolic Church; but the time may come when we must study well the acceptable and persuasive mould of Christian truth, that it may prove itself to be the power and the wisdom of God to nations of a far different type from our own. Perhaps that problem is nearer us than we think.*

But the truth for all ages and for all peoples is the same. And faith for all ages

* See a suggestive article on *The Western Form of Christianity* in *The East and the West*, April, 1913.

and for all peoples is the same. There is one living and true God, in the unity of Whose Godhead there are with the Father His Son and His life-giving Spirit; there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son incarnate, the Redeemer of men. The relation of our souls to our God and Saviour is such that we know Him by faith, and trusting Him enter into His very life and live by it. And this personal relation may grow stronger and stronger and be the sole moving power of our spiritual and moral and intellectual life, in the vigor of which life we shall find the fulness of victorious salvation. Believe in God; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; believe in God's Holy Spirit; thus shall faith make us strong, because our lives shall be lives of faith.

LECTURE IV

FAITH IN THE SPIRIT

I. Corinthians xii. 3.

Οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν Κύριος Ἰησοῦς εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.
"No one can say Lord Jesus except in Holy Spirit."

To complete our study of Faith in God, Who is its one great source and object, we need to turn our thoughts to the Holy Spirit. He, in the true sense of the word 'spirit,' is the life of God as it shows itself and acts and is appropriated in the soul of man. He, also, because the life which He is and imparts is divine, is the great principle and revelation of order in the universe and in the world of man. His working combines both freedom and law; its results are beauty and strength. "Glory and worship are with Him, power and honor are in His every sanctuary." The religious man must have faith in the Holy Spirit, must use His power, must learn truth from Him, for

"He searcheth out all things, even the depths divine."

I

The revelation of God's Spirit, as we have seen, began to be made in the early days. We may not readily distinguish—and we may well believe that the early writers did not intend to distinguish—between the breath of God which brooded over the waters at the world's beginning, which breathing upon man at the beginning of his conscious life as man made him living soul, which spoke in the thoughts and by the words of prophetic men, and the Spirit recognized (at least imperfectly) as a person with powers of instruction and persuasion and revelation. Even for us the distinction is not always clear in the writings of the Apostles and saints of the Church and in our deepest meditation on the things of God; and in the olden times it sufficed that men recognized the voice of God as speaking to them and His life as shaping their lives. "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me"; * we should be

* Psalm li. 11.

hardly surprised to find these words assigned to some pious patriarch under the earliest covenant, and their occurrence in the *Miserere* can hardly help us to assign that Psalm to any period or date. We cannot say what any penitent of Old Testament times must have meant when he prayed that God would not take away from him His holy breath or His holy life, but it would mean at least that the sinner, turning from his sin, was praying that God would not drive him away from the only source of life and light—" Cast me not away from Thy presence " is, as you will remember, the parallel to these words—and thus deprive him of strength.

But certainly, as we read the later writings of the old covenant, we do find that to the Spirit of God are attributed qualities which we cannot but call personal. Guided by prophecy, and quickened by the lively and almost tense expectation which marked the elect in the days that ushered in the advent of the incarnate Son of God, the hope of earlier times became the assurance of those who were waiting for the light of the day-spring from on high. They were ready—it

is not too much to say it—for the coming of the Son and of the Spirit of God, that there might be a full revelation of the eternal Godhead. I will not pause to remind you again of that which I suggested in an earlier lecture, that on the first pages of the Gospel we read of the work of the Holy Spirit, no preparation being made for the announcement of His appearance such as is made for the proclamation of the coming of the Son of God; and that, alike in the words of the narrative and in those which enshrine the teaching of our Lord, we find mention of the Spirit and of His work. The Spirit testifies to Him from His conception to the end of His ministry; one of the Lord's greatest utterances after His resurrection is that in which He bade His disciples to "take Holy Spirit," while the other is the inclusion of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son in the revelation of that Name of God whereby He was to be known in the Church until the consummation of the present age.*

As we pass to the book of the Acts of

* John xx. 23; Matthew xxviii. 19.

the Apostles, how can this be better described than as the Gospel of the Spirit? For from the day of Pentecost on which His gifts were poured out upon the Church until the day when at Rome the new Apostle exhorting the Jews quoted the words which He, the Spirit, spake by a prophet to the fathers of old time,* the book is concerned with the bestowal of the Spirit, His manifold gifts, and the divine ways in which those who had them were trained to use them to the honor of the one Lord of all men whom He called into His Church. In fact, the working and the work of the Spirit is so constantly assumed as lying beneath all that is purposed and done, the manifestation of His power is so constant wherever the Gospel is preached, and His approval is in such wise made the sole test of the right accomplishment of duty, new duty called forth in new ways, that it needs no argument to prove the place of the Holy Spirit in the theory and the actuality of the true life of men. And as His work stands out evidently in all that is done and is taught, so it begins

* Acts ii. 4, xxviii. 25.

to be shown to be absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of a plan which had been hidden from ages and from generations but now had been made manifest to God's saints.*

Here, too, we must note—though it will be impossible to consider so great a matter in any detail—that the Spirit's work is, from the beginning of the new dispensation, described as done in the Body, one as the Spirit is one, which is the Church. In the new creation, as in the old, God breathed upon that which He had prepared and it became soul of life, and the Church was born into the vigor of youth which has since been and rightly is hers. The Body henceforth lives because of the Spirit, and the Spirit inspires life and guides action because it works in the Body. Studying God's purposes from that which He does, we cannot doubt the fact of the Spirit's action nor yet the necessity that He shall act. And this was reverently studied and assuredly known from the beginning.

* Colossians i. 26; Ephesians iii. 4-6; Acts xv. 14 ff.

II

The age of the Church is, then, the dispensation of the Spirit, His *οἰκονομία*, the administration in which His working is especially made known. However we may interpret the words of St. John in his Gospel, "Holy Spirit was not yet, because not yet was Jesus glorified," * it is quite certain that in the days which followed Pentecost, when the glorified Lord had received and sent the promise of the Father, Holy Spirit had become a living and working presence in the Church. Both in words and in works the Apostles showed the power and proved the life of their Master by that which His Spirit inspired. Can we wonder that they expected to see signs wrought through Him? that, realizing that they had entered upon a new age, they were looking for the powers of that coming world? that they were not startled even at an exuberance of revelations, of spiritual gifts, *χαρίσματα* of a higher order than had been known before? or again that they saw wonders where we of later days

* John vii. 39.

can discern but a normal and wonted method of God's goodness and power? Assuredly there were miracles and wonders then; with great power did the Apostles give witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, faith was mighty, and its every exercise was wonderful, and everything wonderful was a proof of the new life. We cannot readily imagine the conditions of the Church in Jerusalem, when the influence and perhaps even the exercise of that first outpouring of the Spirit had not passed away, that day when pious men from all parts of the world caught from otherwise wild utterances something which brought to their understanding, as they said "in their own tongues," the wonderful works of God.

Soon in a quieter way the Apostles taught the glorified Christ and the present Spirit to the throngs who gathered in the great cloisters of the temple; yet those simple men were clad with wonderful dignity, so that even their followers did not dare to join themselves to them, while the crowd treated them with special honor.* If at even they

* Acts ii. 11, iv. 33, v. 12-14.

were put under guard in a prison, they were found in the morning teaching in the very place where they had been arrested; and all the account they could give was that a messenger of the Lord had opened the doors and sent them to continue the delivery of their message.* If a young attendant ordained to be their helper was seized and charged with blasphemy, he spoke in his own defense with the keenness and learning of a great scholar, and with the courage of a tried hero he looked beyond the present danger, his face shining with righteous anger and the strength of truth, until in the shower of stones he fell asleep, and the greatest sowing of the seed of the Church's truth was in the shedding of the blood of that first martyr.† If the strongest man whom the Sanhedrin could furnish, in learning and zeal and hate, was sent forth against the increasing body of believers, something which he saw with the eyes of body or of soul or of both, prostrated and blinded and converted him.‡ Thus, in ways which became quieter indeed, but remained mighty, the plans of

* Acts iv. † Acts vi., vii. ‡ Acts ix.

the Apostles were shaped and guided. Something—some one—told them where to go and what to do, whence to turn away and from what to refrain, some one quieted their controversies and guided them with wisdom so that they could say in the one formal decision which they made, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." * The Spirit, Who began with the manifestation of life and of life's freedom, passed on to show Himself the source of order and of discipline.

The Epistles bear a like testimony as they show how this proof of the Spirit's presence was seen, and how He held the balance, if we may so say, between the excitement of the beginning and the regularity of later days. When St. Paul wrote to the Church of God at Corinth—almost a contradiction in terms, as one has said—it was to men filled with the unregulated enthusiasm of the consciousness of a new power working among them and through them; and we may well admire the judgment and patience with which he quieted them, without denying the truth or the value of the strange manifestations of a

* Acts xv. 28.

divine presence and activity among them.* That he claimed that he himself had done wonderful things at Corinth and elsewhere is evident; nay, he even affirmed that he had a greater power of speaking with tongues than all the rest.† But his plea is for order; and it is noticeable, by the way, that he centres it on the fact that God had set some in station and governance in the Church, that confusion might be avoided and that peace might ensue.‡ Pass to the Epistle to the Ephesians, and you will see how in the city in which the Apostle's presence not many years before had excited a riot, there was a hearing for a quiet but profound study of the work of God's Spirit, and note again that the centre of quiet and unity is the order of the Church's administration.§ It all seems to us a strange world, that in which Christians lived then, in which those early problems were met and for all needed intents solved; but it was a world in which the Spirit of God made Himself known. Believers in

* I. Corinthians xii., xiv.
† I. Corinthians xiv. 18; II. Corinthians xii. 12.
‡ I. Corinthians xii. 28-31. § Ephesians iv.

God when they came to believe also in Jesus Christ His Son knew and felt and used the power of His Holy Spirit. They evidently had faith in the Spirit, and they must have felt that their faith in God was not complete without the recognition of His Spirit; but of this faith we find as yet no clear confession.

III

In the light of what we have thus far gathered from the New Testament, we may certainly say that the faith of the early Christians came from the Holy Spirit and that they had faith in Him.

1. Their faith was a gift of the Spirit—not their faith in Him alone, but all their faith, their trust in God, their allegiance to Him, their knowledge of Him and of the world unseen. It startles us a little to see how St. Paul, in a passage to which reference has just been made, enumerates the gifts—the *χαρίσματα*—of the Spirit.* He is trying to quiet a controversy which centred on the question whether prophecy or speaking with tongues was the greater and more useful

* I. Corinthians xii. 1 ff.

gift; whether, to use words of a modern meaning, preaching with a view to instruction and edification, or ecstatic utterance witnessing to special inspiration and fitted to attract attention, was worth the more in the Church. His first answer is in brief, that all gifts are valuable because they come from the Holy Spirit, and that we cannot say that in itself any one is better than another, because they all have the same source. But see how he proceeds to enumerate them. "To one," says he, "is given through the Spirit a word of wisdom; to another, a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to one of different kind, faith in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit"; and then he passes on to other gifts somewhat resembling healings, all having what we might call a distinctly miraculous character. The order and the stress are certainly remarkable. First are named wisdom and knowledge, two great and fundamental gifts which ought not to have escaped the minds of the contestants; each side would probably assert that it had both, and neither would claim knowledge for itself and leave wisdom for the other.

But before any other gift or manifestation of the Spirit the Apostle puts faith. It is as if he said: You contend about things which are in themselves but externals; you have forgotten the weightier matters which are within and give value to the rest; the Spirit is the source of wisdom, the apprehension of reality and of knowledge, the recognition of facts; and what is real and what is true can be known only by a power of insight which belongs to those who trust in God and believe Him; and this trust and belief are distinctly the work of God's Spirit. Thus he reminded them of the place of faith as being preliminary to such gifts as miracles or speaking with tongues or even prophecy, and of the great truth that faith is the Spirit's gift.

But go back a little and read how St. Paul proposed a test of so-called spiritual gifts, and on what he makes the question of their reality to depend.* It is the same test, we may note, as that which St. John furnishes when he charges his disciples that they should not believe every spirit but try the spirits

* I. Corinthians xii. 3.

whether they are of God, and try them by their acknowledgment or denial that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.* Even so St. Paul, beginning to write as to spiritual things, tells his disciples that no one when he is speaking in God's Spirit saith, "Accursed is Jesus," and that no one can say "Lord Jesus" except in Holy Spirit. And having made this assertion so emphatically, he passes on to speak of the differences of gifts, of ministrations, of workings, while there is but one Spirit, one Lord, and one God. The essential things, he argues, that in which all χαρίσματα or gifts of grace must agree, because it is a prerequisite to them all, is the profession of belief in Jesus Christ as the Lord of souls, as the Lord of each one to whom in any way the Spirit comes or can come. And still more emphatically, if possible, he declares that for this profession so simple in words, so simple because so fundamental in the heart's conviction, there is needed the power of the Holy Spirit. It is in reality no little thing, simple though its form and utterance may be, that any man

* I. John iv. 1-3.

can make the great confession, Jesus is Lord. For it speaks of faith in its every sense, trust and allegiance and knowledge, and the Spirit is thus declared the Spirit of faith.

2. With this recognition of the Holy Spirit as distinctively the Spirit of faith, we also read in the New Testament the proof that the Christians of early times had faith in the Spirit. They knew Him—or rather they came to know Him—as a person, and they wrote of Him as a person, even when so to write involved a solecism. "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come," * so St. John records the Lord's words, using the masculine pronoun though the word for 'spirit' is grammatically of neuter gender, ἐκεῖνος τὸ πνεῦμα, "He the Spirit," and he passes on to describe His work as that of a person: "He shall lead you along the way in (or into) the whole range of truth." In like manner we read, naturally but emphatically, in the Acts and in the Epistles; He speaks, He bears witness, He stands in a personal relation to those who believe in Him and through Him in God; He is the source

* John xvi. 13.

of truth, of life, of order; He effects the presence of the Father and the Son with men; He is the life of the Church; He maketh intercession for us; He searcheth out the depths of God; in His sevenfold glory and power He stands before the throne in heaven; and with the Church He calls to the Lord to come for the completion of His work.*

All this is a witness to the disciples' faith in Him; and therewithal it is a witness to His widely extended influence; for He in Whom men could believe was working mightily in men. It was to impart Him that Apostles laid hands upon those who had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus or into that triune name in which the Son and the Spirit were united with the eternal Father as one God; and witness was borne to His coming and His abiding, now by signs and wonders, now by the sacraments and ordinances of the Church, and now by their quiet fruits as shown in love and longsuffering and fidelity. Surely in those early days it was reasonable, it was

* Revelation i. 4, xxii. 14.

necessary, that those who accepted God as revealed in and by Christ should believe the Spirit, should believe in Him, should acknowledge that all the life of their soul was His; the Spirit ever bore witness with their spirit that they were God's sons, and this witness was the mighty energy of their lives.

IV

In contrast with this, faith in the Spirit as felt and confessed in earliest days and knowledge of the Spirit as the only source of the soul's life, we find that in the declaration and definition of what came to be known as the Faith there is but little said at the first as to the Holy Spirit's place in the œconomy of salvation. More than once indeed, as we have seen, He is named with the Father and the Son in such wise as to show that together with them He was worshipped and glorified, but in the earliest creeds, which made confession of the Son's relation to the Father and to us—"God's only Son, our Lord,"—we find no more said of the Holy Spirit than the simple declaration of faith in Him. And if presently in

the West we find the confession of the Holy Church or of forgiveness of sins in the Holy Church, it is (I venture to think) more as making a fourth division of the creed than as adding to it a statement of the method of the Spirit's working. Doubtless the thought was then, that in the Church the Spirit dwells and is made known and that His presence brings forgiveness and expels sin, but it would seem that the West was content for a while to say of Him as did the East, " And in the Holy Spirit."

This, if we may trust our records, was all that even the Fathers at Nicæa thought it needful to say of the Spirit when they simplified and guarded the words of their former confession as to the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. We so wonder at the baldness and abruptness of the third part of their notable Creed, that possibly we may be allowed to wonder if they did not mean to imply that it was unnecessary to modify the form in which the former creeds had closed. It would not be quite correct to say that when the council of Nicæa assembled there had been no controversy as to the

Holy Spirit; but certainly there had been no serious questioning as to the Spirit which was not involved in the discussions as to the Son; and it may be that the council, knowing that the faith of the earlier days was still held in this regard, while framing a form of words which should be used everywhere when men spoke of the Son, left it to each "particular" Church to speak of the Spirit as it was wont or as it judged needful. Scholars are generally in agreement now that the addition to the creed of Nicæa affirmed at Chalcedon came not from Constantinople but from Jerusalem, mother and mistress of all the churches. Thus we seem to hear from the lips of the catechist-bishop of the mother-city what he taught concerning the Spirit, that He was Lord and Lifegiver, that His procession was from the Father Who alone is αὐτόθεος, that with Father and Son He was to be honored and glorified, that He was revealed in the earlier days as the prophets spoke by His inspiration. And, after the few words of the West which remained unamplified and after the expanded formula of the East, both branches of the Church

were guided to add, as to the Spirit's working, articles which speak of the Church, of the restoration which is affected in it by forgiveness, and of that which remains for man redeemed and forgiven and sanctified—resurrection of the flesh and the life of a coming age. They passed from the Spirit, only mentioned or mentioned with a declaration of His relation to men and to the Father, to tell of His great works as objects of faith for this world and the next. Faith in the Spirit both preceded and extended far beyond the Faith in which men spoke of Him, even as they were guided by Him to believe and to make confession.

We may see a reason for this when we consider that, while we believe the Holy Spirit and believe in Him, He is not as yet fully revealed; the revelation of Him is still in the making, especially as His manifoldly variegated work * is shown in the complicated history of the Church and in His conflict for righteousness under the most adverse conditions. It has been said that the Church of England is lamentably deficient in works on

* *πολυποίκιλος* may be applied here as in Ephesians i. 10.

the theology of the Spirit, there being until lately almost no work of value on this great subject later than Bishop Heber's Bampton Lectures.* The reproach, if it should be so called, has been in part removed by Professor Swete's scholarly and devout work in which, by way of prolegomena, he had examined and commented on every passage in the New Testament in which the Spirit is mentioned, and which he has followed by another volume on the teaching of the early Church on this matter.† But really the Church, as these volumes show, was not ready at the first, and it is not ready now, to state definitely all that she would wish to state as to the third Person of the Trinity and His work in the œconomy of this dispensation. Men in patriarchal and prophetic days came to know God, and then the Son revealed Him and He was confessed as Father; in the Incarnation men learned to know the Son Who taught the theology of the Father, and then the Spirit revealed Him as Jesus Christ and

* *The Personality and Office of the Christian Comforter*, 1835.

† *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament; The Holy Spirit in the Early Church.*

guided the phraseology of the Church as she learned how He might be rightly confessed; now we are coming to know the Spirit, and we may be bidden to look forward to a time when, as to the theological confession, "God shall reveal even this" unto us.* It is not the English Church alone which cannot yet in complete form of words confess the Spirit; the great historic Churches of East and West do not agree as to the form of words in which they may rightly state His relation to the Father and the Son; devout and wise scholars are sure that in faith they agree, and we cannot lay too great stress on this; but the one declares that it can say no more than that He proceedeth from the Father and the other does not dare to say less than that He proceedeth from the Father and the Son; while neither can tell us clearly what is meant by 'proceedeth,' though both agree in the second part of the Creed as to the meaning, or at least the symbolism, of 'begotten.' It would

* See especially at the end of Professor Scott's article on *The Trinity* in the additional (fifth) volume of Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible,* to the opening words of which reference has been made on an earlier page.

seem that for a long time yet—at least until some great change shall come—our theology must wait in this matter upon faith.*

And even as to this, is our faith in the Spirit of God as well defined and as strong as is our faith in the Father and the Son? Doubtless, whence we force our minds to think and our hearts to worship, we make no distinction, but say the third phrase of our Gloria with the same earnestness and sense of reality and devotion as its opening words; but we do not quite readily think of the Spirit as a person, a person with Whom we have relations, a person Whom we love and in Whom we can confide and to Whom we go for comfort and grace; we need to watch ourselves lest in speaking or writing of Him we say 'it,' as if His personality were but a figure of rhetoric; we are not readily conscious of His presence and of its effect on ourselves. Our faith is real, it is sure; but it has not gained its full strength, and it has not led to as full knowledge as we feel

* So also as to the theology and the practice of Confirmation, the Churches of the East and of the West are not in agreement; and there is no consent as to the 'grace' which it confers.

we need. As the confession of the Son could not be made in clear words until those who believed in Him had challenged their faith and contended for it, so the confession of the Spirit calls for a stronger and more searchingly tried faith than we now have. When with the heart the Church steadfastly believes in Him unto righteousness, then with the mouth will she be able to make full confession of Him unto salvation.

V

Here we have, then, a striking and most important example of the Faith, in our technical use of the word, waiting for faith and manifestation. Thus it has been or is with all truth, for practically all is reached and acquired and acknowledged in the same way. Thus, as the centuries have passed on, men have believed and had faith in God, have come to know Him and have declared their faith and their knowledge in their Creed. Thus, having their faith directed towards the Son of God, they welcomed Him and knew Him and saw in what terms they might sing His greatness and His love. And in like

manner, we who live in the age in which the manifestation of the Spirit is taking place, can trace somewhat of the progress of our faith to knowledge and thence to boldness of utterance, the plainness of speech,* which elect souls shall first attain and which they shall teach the Church. That expression of faith, not fully declared in the form of creed, is yet seen in the words as to progress in sanctification and towards salvation which have been added to the declaration that we believe in the Holy Spirit. As we accept and use the Church, the Scriptures, and the Sacraments, we show that we do really believe in the Holy Spirit, Who is the Church's life, Who speaks in the Scriptures, Whose power is operative in the Sacraments. As we find forgiveness and grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we are conscious that the Spirit's holiness and power are becoming effective in us; and in our lives there is at least the beginning of a revelation of Him, as we find them quickened with new energy, endowed with new freedom, directed in the

* *παρρησία*, Acts iv. 31; II. Corinthians iii. 12; etc.

way of right, supported in dangers, carried through temptations, prepared to know Him better, that "we may with steadfast faith ever acknowledge" Him,

> "The Spirit of Father and of Son,
> One God in Persons Three."

Thus we may learn that our faith, our sure confidence, our strong allegiance, may grow even as our knowledge grows; and that there should be for us a daily increase in all the gifts of the Spirit, wisdom and understanding, counsel and ghostly strength, knowledge and true godliness, and—crowning all the rest and binding them together—the holy fear of God. And thus we shall do somewhat towards preparing the Church, in words of Catholic truth and devotion, to make a full declaration of faith, the Catholic Faith as to the eternal and blessed Spirit Whom she ever worships and Whose divine power she constantly invokes.

LECTURE V

THE LIFE OF FAITH

Galatians ii. 20.

Ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν πίστει ζῶ.

"And what I now live, I live in faith."

We have been engaged in a study of faith and of its relation to the confession of faith which is made by the Christian Church in the recital of the Creed. And in particular we have considered the fundamental truths of faith, belief in God, belief in Jesus Christ, and belief in the Holy Spirit, as presented to our souls and as leading to confession by our lips. Faith as personal allegiance and faith as a source of knowledge we have seen combining to increase the depth and the extent of our apprehension of the realities of the divine nature, of the truth of the Son of God incarnate in human nature, and of the Spirit of God as dwelling in the souls of men. In these examples, which may well

suggest others, we see both life and the revelation of truth growing out of faith, and faith leading up to confession and guiding it, even if it cannot be fully expressed by it. For faith demands life, and is a condition of life, and leads to life given and growing more abundantly. Our special topic, then, to-day is the Christian's Life of Faith.

I

If we go back to our definitions, or rather to the New Testament statements in regard to faith, we can see that each tells us somewhat of the nature of the true life of the soul. The truthfulness and trustworthiness and allegiance of man to God-ward, what are they but the working of a life, real and moral, freely acting yet recognizing dependence and duty? Each in varied aspect tells of a relationship, necessary yet gladly acknowledged, between us and the heavenly Father. To trust Him, to respond to His trust in us, to surrender ourselves to Him—and all this is involved in the simplest thought of faith—is to live a life of simple yet strong relation to Him Who thus calls

out our faith and therewith quickens our belief: "He that believeth hath life." Recall the definition with which the writer to the Hebrews introduces the record of some of the great heroes of faith: you will see that that which gives reality to hope and proves things not seen must be a power to influence life.* And as you read on you will find the effects of this faith shown in life. It led one of the men of oldest time to offer worship, and another to build an ark; one to exchange his home for a place of sojourn in a strange land, and another to do such quiet duty that all we need know of him is that He pleased God. It inspired some to die in hope of a coming deliverance, and one specially chosen as a leader to do his varied work as seeing Him Who is invisible. And in the days of judges and prophets and Maccabees it made men and women brave to suffer and to do, to become such that the world was not worthy of them, and to die without complaining that they had not yet received the promise. All this has to do, indeed, with the external,

* Hebrews xi.

but in its every item it witnesses to character; if these men and women had not lived in faith, it could not have been written that in faith they died. Pass on to St. John's writings in Gospel and Epistle and Apocalypse; and, as we have seen already, faith is there identified with life and life with faith. To believe, he tells us both when he is reporting the Lord's sayings and when he is speaking from his own experience, is to have the true strong victorious life of the soul; nay, the victory that overcometh the world is our faith. And in his words as to the great assurances, he says: "These things I write to you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, to you who are believers on the Name of the Son of God." "The Son of God hath given us discernment of mind to know the Very One, and we are in the Very One, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the Very God and life eternal." *

Look at the argumentative words in which St. Paul deals with faith as opposed to works, with the justification which God freely gives as opposed to the righteousness

* John iii. 36, vi. 40; I. John v. 4, 5, 13, 20.

which is by the law, and you will find him closely connecting the life of the soul with faith: "I through law once died to law, that I may live to God; I have been crucified with Christ, and I am living no longer myself but there is living in me Christ; and what I now am living in flesh, in faith I am living—the faith of the Son of God, of Him Who loved me and gave Himself up for me." * The depth of these and such like words no man can sound; their truth is certified by the experience of our own souls in their progress in that which is distinctively their life.

Verily our life is life of faith; faith is its principle, faith its test, faith its goal, faith—may we not say?—its reward.

II

But let us trace out the steps of the life of the child of God, and see how from its simple beginning to its full completion they are all guided by faith, they are all acts of faith. This is true, whether that life is considered as God's gift growing under His

* Galatians ii. 19, 20.

care, or as lived by man under circumstances which he has it in his power to control.

It is certainly God's gift. It has its beginning from Him and He is its source and origin. Why the life of the Almighty and self-sufficing God should flow forth, producing a creation and continuing that creation in existence, we cannot tell; why He should desire the existence of something which should appear to be beyond Himself, the mind is baffled at any attempt to explain; why He should call into existence, by processes of long continuance and by an evolution not always uniform in operation, rational beings with the power of refusing obedience to His will, is the puzzle of the universe. Again, we know but in part the method of His action, and of its principles our mind and our soul cannot take cognizance; how God created we do not know, and how at the last He gave man an existence seemingly so independent of His own we do not know. It is now, as it was near the beginning of this dispensation: "By faith we apprehend that the ages were fashioned by an utterance of God, with the result that what is seen

hath not come into existence out of things phenomenal, things that are appearing." * And true though it is that the study of God's work, in that to which it has already reached and that to which it is evidently tending, does justify His ways by what we are sure will be a righteous theodicy, both the discovery of the largely unproved purpose and the vision of the final result are great acts of faith, and that too of faith which has been exercised and trained for deep understanding and lofty ventures. Faith, accepting the fact and having little knowledge of the efficient and the final cause, is yet bold to say that the Creator will at the last be justified for the most awful act of omnipotence, the creation of a rational being endowed with free will, and in the result of that system of training through temptation and choice and growth of character—the attainment of character by the use of discipline —which shall prove itself worthy of God and of man.

But I think that when we speak of the life of the soul we have specially in mind

* Hebrews xi. 3.

that life which is in its operation the process of salvation and of which the New Testament speaks so earnestly and constantly. This, which is really God living in man, and so far from limiting his personality really calling it out and building it up, is in its every step from God, known, apprehended, put into operation, and kept in operation by faith. Its first action is from God's calling; its first formal act is God's regeneration, the implanting in us of the germ of the spiritual, which is equivalent to the beginning of a personal relation to God; its constant supply is seen in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the acceptance and use of which means constant progress; its reward is God's gift, suited to His call, His regeneration, His guidance, which could come indeed from naught else, and by necessity comes thence to those who receive it. Each step as we thus trace the life in its aspect God-ward appeals to faith, to faith as an element of character and faith as an act of knowledge, to the tender of allegiance and the acceptance of knowledge of the unseen.

When viewed from the man-ward side, the

Christian life is marked at the first by acceptance of the calling, then more definitely by conversion which is the normal concomitant of regeneration, passing on to the extended process of sanctification under God's guidance, and having for its issue victory which as coming from God is our reward. As to most of us God's call comes quietly, so early indeed that we carry no distinct memory of it, and few of us know more of our acceptance of the call than that we must have tendered it when our souls first grasped the thought that we stood in some relation to God, that God was a reality to us. It was faith in its germ, but true faith, which made the response then; those with whom still dwells the consciousness of the call can testify to the reality of the response which they gave, and gave through faith and in the operation of its power. Conversion, hard (especially for us Churchmen) to define because of the inaccurate and perverse definitions which have been given to the word—conversion, which at least involves the conscious recognition of a relation to God, what it is and what it ought to be, and the

determination to make it what it ought to be, the resolution of man, knowing his sinfulness and his weakness, to seek pardon from Him Who alone can forgive and strength from Him without Whom nothing is strong; conversion, impossible in its Christian sense without regeneration, and absolutely necessary that regeneration may lead to any result; conversion, dependent altogether we are sure upon God's grace, and yet our act as by God's grace inspired—this is the work of faith, recognizing duty, proffering allegiance, grasping realities, determined to do and to suffer for the truth's sake. Sanctification, the daily increase in God's Holy Spirit under the guidance of that Spirit more and more, the advance into and in holiness, the progressive cleansing and strengthening of the character, its greater value and its greater usefulness, its widening knowledge and its deepening religion, in all dependent and acknowledging that it is dependent upon the Divine guidance—this is the work of faith and comes from what faith is and what faith can do. And what we call the victory, as it comes from man's

fidelity, and the reward, as it comes from God's truth, this is—to use again St. John's bold words—our faith, in that it triumphs over the world and all that is worldly, all that is transitory because it is temporal and thus out of the range of faith; may it not be quite as literally that the reward shall be greater visions of the unseen, greater power to do the impossible, greater inspiration for worship and for service?

The true life of the Christian—to it we come by faith, into it we are born by faith, in it by faith we make progress, its victorious and perfect issue is faith. Our life hath been hidden and remains hidden, as Christ is hidden, in God;* and this certainly means that only by the loftiest and mightiest operations of faith is it felt and known, used and strengthened and perfected. There is no true life in man which is not the life of faith.

III

I fear lest I may seem to detract from the reality or the spirituality of the life of

* Colossians iii. 3, 4.

faith when I affirm that it is rightly described as the sacramental life. The word 'sacramental' may seem to mean either ceremonial as some understand it or figurative as it presents itself to others; and certainly the life of faith is not a life of external observances or unreality. It must indeed have an expression in acts, and those acts will be largely acts of worship; it must also be confessed as beyond the power of expression, and therefore the words in which its truth is uttered must be in a sense but symbols. But we must claim for the word 'sacramental' an interpretation which guards against perversion on the one side or the other. A sacrament is an external truth or action so connected with an internal truth or action that it bears witness to it, represents it, is affected by it, and in turn affects it. All manifestations of God are sacramental, for they come from Him and declare His perfections and manifest His attributes under necessary limitations. All manifestations of fundamental and ideal truth are sacramental for the self-same reason; they come necessarily from the truth to beings who

have the capacity for receiving them, and they both reveal and impart the truth. Nature in her wonderful beauty and order and might and beneficence is sacramental; she imparts a knowledge of God and calls to His worship, and as we listen to her voice and follow her leading she brings to us the life of her Creator. Thought and reason are sacramental when they turn upon lofty objects, and bid us know the inner meaning of things with the secret of their purpose and their action. Nothing which is unseen is manifested except sacramentally; and the mean whereby the reality and the power of the unseen is given to us is faith.

The life of faith in our souls is therefore sacramental, given to us and continued in us by a power, unseen indeed, but of the reality of which we cannot doubt; and its greatest and most necessary acts have to do with God's greatest and most efficient sacraments, that by which the true life of the soul is once bestowed and that by which that life is ever derived and quickened and enabled to grow. The special requisite for the reception of the benefit of each is faith. If re-

pentance is put before faith as required of those who come to receive Baptism, it is because, in thought at least, the knowledge of our want must precede our seeking for the supply of that want; but for supply of our want faith is necessary, "whereby we stedfastly believe the promises of God made to us in that sacrament." And in like manner, in the Catechism's enumeration of what is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper, after the call to repentance of former sins and the purpose to lead a new life, we are bidden to "have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ." In fact, in what way soever we regard the sacraments which Christ hath ordained in His Church, we find that they appeal to faith, to our acceptance of God's promise, to our professing and proffering allegiance to Him, and to our search for truth more profound and more real than that which reaches us through our senses.

If we look upon the sacraments as symbols, as indeed all acknowledge that they are, then in the washing which cleanses the body and in the eating and drinking which maintain its life we find presented to our souls

an opportunity of their washing from sin and their strengthening for duty which can come only from God's action upon them in His forgiving and strengthening grace. If we recognize in the sacraments a mystic truth, then certain it is that they lead to the union of our souls with our Lord, in such wise that we enter into His holy life and are built up in it. If we speak of them as spiritual, it can hardly be without an acknowledgment that the spiritual has to do with the very centre of our life, that the spiritual is the source of our existence, that it modifies and controls all our faculties and powers, and that by it we are brought under an influence which can change all that we have into the reality of likeness to God. If the sacraments have a human side, as we cannot doubt, they have to do with man at his best, or certainly at the possibility of his best; if they have a divine side, as confessedly they have, it is because in them God is taking hold of us and is bidding us take hold of Himself. There must be in them a great reality, the reality of the spirit, of the unseen, of God. Therefore in whatever way we regard

them, they call for our apprehension of the unseen, our knowledge of God, our faith; and thus they are real things, not barren figures of the absent, but themselves through our faith bringing with them that whereof they tell and—we almost venture to say—being that of which they are the assurance.

What is true of the two sacraments, properly so called, is true of every act of the Christian life, whether it seems mystical or practical, whether it has to do with worship or with work. "The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God"; so was St. Paul writing; but he was not content to leave his testimony indefinite, and he applied it to even the lowest phase of his activity: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith." * The power unseen, that is to say, guided all that he did; laying hold on the springs of being and of action, it made his whole life sacramental, real and strong, because a greater life was guiding it and perfecting it; each outward and visible act came from an inward and spiritual grace. The sacramental life seeks for the outward signs and uses them, because of this very

* Galatians ii. 20.

connection, and thus it quickens the external life with the spirit of worship, and balances what might else be mechanically practical by the mystical atmosphere which brightens it and makes it joyful. The life which finds its inspiration in that tone of devotion and work for the Master which our Book of Common Prayer so wonderfully commends and inculcates is the life of faith and sacrament, the eternal life which is already for the believer a real and enduring possession.

IV

After what has been said in regard to our faith in God and in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, we shall not be surprised if we find the faith by which we live—*fides qua vivitur*—undefinable and not always able to give a full account of itself. When we attempt to define that which is truly of faith and sacramental, we either materialize it by bringing it into the class of things sensible, or we evaporate it by denying to it even the property of being apprehensible. The judicious Hooker saw that to be true of the Lord's Supper which is true of all matters

and facts that are spiritually discerned, that men are so determined to put their thoughts—even their unsettled and controversial thoughts—into words, that the imperfection of their statements makes their thoughts still less adequate than before to represent the truth which in its essence they believe.* If men—so in substance he pleaded—would but agree to profess and teach that as to which they are in agreement, great would be the beauty and the power of their utterance; the highest revelation would inspire but praise, the deepest mysteries would teach but humble adoration. So plead the thoughtful leaders of men in our own day. Men's beliefs lie beneath their words, and we can often see, and often confidently assume, that they are in harmony when their expression is inharmonious if not inconsistent. In our private devotions as we prepare for the reception of the greatest of sacraments, and in the worship of the congregation as we draw near in faith, we pass beneath the simple phrasing of our own prayers or above the dignified utterance of our historic liturgy, to know

* *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, V. xvii. 12.

Who it is Whose voice speaks to our souls and why we are following the guidance of His voice. It may be that, if we were called to give utterance to our faith, we should not use the words which would come to the lips of the scholarly priest who ministers to us, or the words which would be used by the thankful saint or the penitent sinner who kneels at our side; but we know, to use Hooker's phrase, the cogitations which possess the soul of each faithful communicant: "O my God, Thou art true; O my soul, thou art happy."

The words of controversy or of explanation are not necessary for the faith of the life, the belief of the soul; and the pious controversialist—for such there are—falls back on simple faith in the hour of repentance, of thanksgiving, of communion with his Lord. That simple faith does not differ greatly in truly devout souls. It witnesses the essential fact that man is brought near to God, that man trusts God and surrenders himself to Him to receive blessing and to render service, and that thus man knows God as God knows him. It does not make

little of the external act, for that is of the very nature of sacrament; but it passes through it to the great spiritual truth which it represents and to which it leads: "that the person baptized may receive the everlasting benediction of God's heavenly washing," that the believing communicant may become a "partaker of Christ's most precious Body and Blood," "his sinful body being made clean by Christ's Body and his soul washed through Christ's Blood."

But the sacramental life, as we have noted already, is not confined to the faithful use of the two great sacraments, though it can be seen in every deed to be based upon them, nor yet to the blessing which reaches us through other ordinances that are rightly termed sacramental. It is the whole life of the Christian as it is consciously lived within the covenant. It is hidden with Christ in God, and therefore it is in all its parts Christian and divine. Its principle is simple, its manifestations are many and complicated, its methods and its powers are beyond the ability of tongue to express or even of mind to conceive; and while its stay

is the faith, the Creed with its witness to faith and the Faith, its reality does not depend upon it; rather it testifies to the reality of which the Creed is the expression. Study, as carefully as you will and dare, any good disciple in whom you recognize the life of faith; and you will be able to discern the realities on which it rests and the facts to which it testifies; they are the facts of what we call the Faith, but the realities are those of faith as the fundamental principle.

V

Thus then we see in the Christian life the same principle which is strikingly illustrated in the Christian profession. Its central act or fact is allegiance to God, and union with Him; and this allegiance and union with the divine, with Father and Son and Holy Spirit, is expressed in thought and in speech by simple utterances, the value of which is enhanced as they express the faith of a body of believing people; for they, conscious of one life, utter each his "I believe" with the strength and the challenge of a common con-

viction and a common duty, yes and with the energy of a common inspiration. As members of the body, the organic company of those who have been called into the life of Christ that they may believe in Him and know Him, and who have come to believe in Him and know Him that they may partake yet more fully of His Spirit and His life, they have a unity more close and complete than can possibly be found or held in any other way; they believe in one God, they know and hold allegiance to one Lord, they have the life of one Spirit. That faith, that allegiance, that life, are great realities, destined to endure and to become more strong through the experience of one who has them—yet not without the danger that by his own fault they may be weakened or even lost. And the fact that they can be attained and held in no other way than by acceptance of the truth makes it necessary that those who hold them shall unite in their recognition of the truth, that they who are one body because they hold one faith and are in allegiance to one Lord shall confess one Creed. But here, as elsewhere, alle-

giance lies back of the Creed, and faith prepares the way for the Faith.

With creeds, the expression of the essentials of our belief in words, we should place, I think, Christian worship and Christian ordinances, the expressions of our belief in acts, and those the acts of a body of believers. It is no little thing that all Western Christendom is content to use a very ancient and simple baptismal creed as a sufficient statement of its Christian faith, of the faith of its myriad congregations, of the faith of its innumerable members. And it is even more wonderful that all Christendom, Eastern and Western, when in the Eucharistic service it wishes to make a more explicit defence of its faith, should still be content to use words which come from the councils of the fourth and fifth centuries. The reason is that these formularies do so express and guard that to which the faith and reason of believers have long and unitedly given assent, that we know the certainty and the reasonableness of their interpretation, and that the tone of controversy, absent from the one, has in the other become an acknowl-

edgment of the victory of truth and faith. And the daily offices, with psalms and lessons and hymns and prayers, the sacramental services with words of confession and oblation and adoration, the special services for the most solemn occasions in life—these are all professions of faith, applicable to the needs of any human being who within the covenant looks for the blessings covenanted by faith. As with the Creeds, so with the Church's other formularies; all who have Christian faith as the rule of their lives, all whose lives are lived in the faith of the Son of God, the Saviour, may enter into the Church's worship; for she has confidence that their faith finds its expression in her Faith, or—if we may so phrase it—that she may make her Faith the expressions of their allegiance and their belief. Thus one great principle runs through all true religious life, and faith is the victory that overcometh the world.

The thought which has in my mind underlain the argument of these lectures has an

application, I think, to some controverted matters which hardly ought to be matters of controversy at all. If the faith uttered in words is an attempt to express faith which really exists in the soul, then, while our responsibility for a right expression is great, the value of the belief exceeds the value of the form of words in which it is stated. If faith in God leads us to faith in God's Son and Word and Spirit, it is not necessary that always and everywhere we should insist on the use of words which have never passed into the Creeds and are not employed theologically in the Prayer Book. If faith in Jesus Christ means for us that He is the eternal Son who has taken man's nature that He may bring man to God, then the technical terms needed for no other purpose than to establish that faith—none of them, except 'being of one substance with,'* having been brought into formal use—may not be thought of as under all circumstances necessary for Christian fellowship and Christian life. If the life of faith is the life of all Christian men, then we may not make it a

* ὁμοούσιος.

condition of recognition of this life that the manner of its reception or its progress should be described in the same terms by all those who use its appointed means. The old terms, made more valuable by continued use, will doubtless long continue in lands in which the Greek influence prevails in language and in philosophy; but in the case of nations outside of that influence, some of which we are now seeking to call into the Church, we must not lay such stress on the phraseology of the confession as to imperil the reception of that faith which alone can give it value.

And among ourselves, whose duty it is so to present the ancient faith that it may be accepted by the honest and true hearts of a new generation—a generation which is passionately seeking for truth,—we must beware lest we insist, or seem to insist, on formulas when we mean to lay stress on truth; and above all we must beware lest by putting our own glosses upon accepted forms of words we narrow the truth which they do really convey, narrow the generous faith which consents to them, and even narrow the company of faithful people who can

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honestly worship and serve in accordance with them. Our Prayer Book represents a generosity of worship, as our Creeds—and I do not hesitate to add our Articles—represent a generosity of faith; each can be held with absolute fidelity to the authority of Scripture and of the Church, because each can be held with absolute fidelity to faith tested by reason, which is our personal reliance on God, the inspiration of our fidelity to Him, the source of our knowledge of Him, the very victory in which stands our salvation. That faith shall ever remain in the souls of men, in the Creeds of the Church, in sacramental worship, and in spiritual life; it must be tried, as it has been and is tried; but it shall grow stronger in all the ages, and its hymns of victory shall never cease to echo in "heaven's eternal arches."

Τῷ τῆς πίστεως Ἀρχηγῷ καὶ Τελειωτῇ
ἡ δόξα· ἀμήν.

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